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VISIONARY EXITS

Bindeshwar Pathak, Sulabh founder, dies

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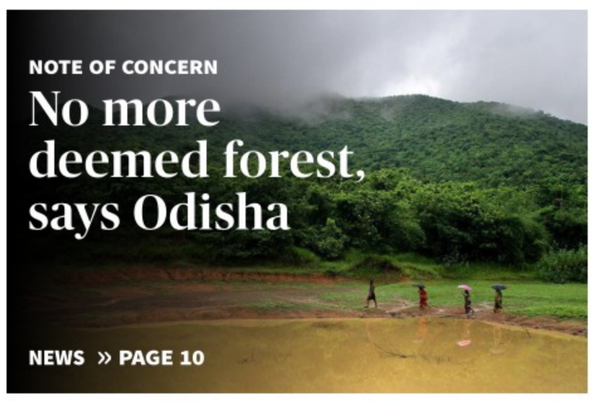

NOTE OF CONCERN

No more deemed forest, says Odisha

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2020 ELECTION

Trump indicted for poll racketeering

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DATA POINT

Tomato prices behind high inflation

Impact was felt more in the southern States

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STUNNING WIN

Spain pips Sweden, enters summit clash

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NEARBY

Hike in MSP raises price of rice

BENGALURU
For people in predominantly rice-consuming regions, the last few weeks have been tough as the price of rice has increased on an average by 15%. The price of rice in Bengaluru started moving upwards since the second week of July. » PAGE 4

'Belagavi may be split into three'

BELAGAVI
The State govt. is considering a proposal to create Gokak and Chikkodi districts by carving up Belagavi district, Satish Jarkiholi, Minister for Public Works, said in Belagavi on Tuesday. » PAGE 4

OPPORTUNITIES » PAGE 3

Will return with a report card in 2024, Modi says at Red Fort

Country should rid itself of corruption, dynasty politics, and appeasement politics, says PM, who declares that India will be the third largest economy in his next term; Centre and State are working together to bring peace in Manipur, he asserts

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI

Delivering his last Independence day speech, the last ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha election, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a strong pitch for his return to the ramparts of Red Fort next year.

Noting that he came to power in 2014 promising change, and was elected again in 2019 on the basis of his government's performance, Mr. Modi said he would present a report card of India's achievements in 2024.

"Next time, on August 15th, at this very Red Fort, I will speak of the achievements of our country, the potential and resolve of our people and their success and self confidence," Mr. Modi said, in a speech lasting 89 minutes.

Mr. Modi added his "guarantee" that in his next term, India would be the third largest economy. To develop further, the country should rid itself of three big obstacles: corruption, dynasty politics, and appeasement politics, Mr. Modi said.

He reiterated his assurance in Parliament that the country was with the people of Manipur, which has been in the grip of ethnic violence for the last few months. The Union and State governments were working together to bring peace there, he said.

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Narendra Modi delivering the Independence Day address from the Red Fort. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Housing scheme for urban poor

NEW DELHI
Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced a new scheme to help the urban poor build houses in cities. Under this programme, people would get relief in interest rates and loans taken from banks to construct houses. » PAGE 11

Kharge skips PM's address

NEW DELHI
Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge skipped the Prime Minister address, citing an eye problem as well as the PM's security protocol, which he claimed, would not have allowed him to reach on time from the AICC office.

Entire Purple Line to be operational in September, says CM

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced that the eagerly anticipated inauguration of the extended Purple Line of Namma Metro in Bengaluru – from Challaghatta to Kadugodi (Whitefield) – will become operational in September 2023.

Addressing people on the occasion of the 77th Independence Day at Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw Parade Ground on August 15, Mr. Siddaramaiah, said, "At present, the total stretch of metro train network in Bengaluru is 69.66 km. About 6.1 lakh passengers are using the metro train facilities daily. By September 2023, the Baiyappanahalli-Krishnarajapura line and Kengeri-Challaghatta line expansion will be ready."

The Nagasandra-Madavara extension on the Green Line and the new line between R.V. Road and Bommanahalli are expected to be operational by December 2023. By 2026, Namma Metro will have a 175.55-km network in Bengaluru. Today, the metro network in Bengaluru stands second in India, Mr. Siddaramaiah informed.

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By 2026, Namma Metro will have a 175.55-km network in Bengaluru. FILE PHOTO

'State will release 10 tmcft of Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Tuesday said that Karnataka would release 10 tmcft of Cauvery river water to the neighbouring Tamil Nadu.

Speaking to a news agency on the Tamil Nadu government moving Supreme Court for the immediate release of Cauvery water by Karnataka, Mr. Shivakumar said, "I don't think it is necessary, but we will abide by... We don't have sufficient water, but we are going to release 10 tmcft of water. We are already on the job."

Tamil Nadu on Monday approached the Supreme Court with a plea to direct Karnataka to release 24,000 cusecs of Cauvery water from its reservoir for the remaining period of the month, starting from August 14. It argued the release of water is a dire necessity to meet the pressing demands of the standing crops. Karnataka, however, has been arguing that with a deficit monsoon, it is not in a position to release water. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that distress also needs to be shared.

Celebrating Independence Day

Vidhana Soudha illuminated with the colours of the national flag for Independence Day celebrations in Bengaluru on Tuesday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Kukis from Myanmar not to be blamed: MP

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Countering Home Minister Amit Shah's statement in Parliament last week that Kukis from Myanmar contributed to the present ethnic tension in Manipur, K. Vanlalvena, a Rajya Sabha member from Mizoram, said that though his State had sheltered more than 40,000 "refugees" from the neighbouring country since 2021, they had never created any problems.

Mr. Vanlalvena's party, the Mizo National Front (MNF), is a constituent of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

Muted in Parliament

He said he was not allowed to speak on the Manipur issue in Parliament. "Every day since the beginning of the Monsoon Session [on July 20], I gave notices to discuss Manipur, but it was not accepted by the Chair. On August 11, a day after Mr. Shah blamed the Kukis from Myanmar, when I wanted to speak, the microphone was switched off," he told *The Hindu*.

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K. Vanlalvena

Rain fury leads to more deaths in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

At least eight houses, including six makeshift ones, were razed by a massive landslip in the Krishnanagar locality of Himachal Pradesh on Tuesday morning, leaving two dead and several missing. A slaughterhouse was also buried under the debris. Videos of the incident, in which big trees could be seen falling on homes with deafening noise and calls for help, went viral on social media.

State emergency services also recovered four more bodies from the rubble of a collapsed Shiv temple in Shimla on Tuesday, apart from the eight bodies already recovered. Rescuers feared that 10 more were still trapped in the rubble of the temple. The death toll from the heavy rain that battered Himachal Pradesh since Sunday night crossed 56.

In Uttarakhand, five people died in rain-related incidents as major rivers – the Alaknanda, Mandakini and the Ganga – continued to flow near the danger mark in the hills.

To safety: People injured in landslips following torrential rain in Shimla being shifted to nearby hospitals in Tuesday. PTI

Yatra suspended

As landslips continue to block roads and the weather forecast warned of more rain in the next few days, the State government has suspended the Char Dham Yatra.

State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) teams used temporary zip-lines to rescue people trapped on the Madmaheshwar walking route, as the bridge connecting the temple highway was washed away, leaving 150 stranded. The SDRF rescued 45 people till Tuesday evening.

(With inputs from PTI)

800 third semester Business Statistics students of Bengaluru North University secure 0 marks

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

Around 800 students have secured zero marks and 8,000 students have failed in the Business Statistics exam of the third semester of B.Com in Bengaluru North University.

The results were announced last week and it is said that this is the first time in Bengaluru North University that such a large number of students have failed in a single subject. Out of 12,000 students who wrote the exam, only 4,000 have passed.

After the trifurcation of Bangalore University, the Bengaluru North University has been functioning as an independent university since 2017-18 academic year at Kolar. A total of 262 degree colleges, including those in Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural, Kolar and Chickballapur, come under the university.

The university conducted the 1st, 3rd and 5th undergraduate (UG) courses examinations in April/May 2023 and it announced the results last week.

Students shocked

Most students of Business Statistics expressed shock at the result. "In the 1st and 2nd semesters, I secured good marks in the subject. It is really shocking that I have scored so less in the 3rd semester. Even rank students have scored very less in this subject. All this is because of the poor evaluation system," said one of the students.

Another student said Business Statistics is a high scoring subject wherein many students score out of out marks. "But this year, it is really shocking that 800 students have scored zero marks and the highest number of students have failed. When we asked about this injustice in the college, they pointed fingers at the university and the evaluators. We staged a protest in front of the university head office for justice. We have also given August 18 as the deadline to rectify the error," said the student.

According to the internal sources of the university, many colleges have missed entering the internal marks of the students in the Unified University College Management System (UUCMS) portal.

Niranjana Vanalli, Vice Chancellor of the University, told *The Hindu* that the varsity was conducting the semester examination according to the rules and regulations of the National Education Policy (NEP), which uses the 40:60 marks ratio. "Internal assessment will be conducted for 40 marks in the college level and written exam will be conducted for the other 60 marks. The colleges should give the internal marks to the students on the basis of assignment and other activities and should enter the marks in the UUCMS portal. Most colleges give out of out internal marks to the students," he said.

CONTINUED ON
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A BG-BGE

Tilak Varma — a silver lining in World Cup squad haze

With the ODI marquee event only six weeks away, there is once again no clarity on who will don a key role. The southpaw offers hope that the team has found a suitable option for the the middle-order slot, which is the most pressing concern

Ashwin Achal

Not for the first time, the Indian team management has yet to identify a settled squad as a World Cup fast approaches.

When the team was announced for the 2019 Cricket World Cup, there was a surprise in store as Ambati Rayudu was left out in favour of Vijay Shankar. Then chief selector M.S.K. Prasad justified Vijay Shankar's inclusion, stating that the all-rounder brought in a "three-dimensional" flavour. That did not go down well with a miffed Rayudu.

The 2023 Cricket World Cup is only six weeks away, and once again, there is no clarity on who will don a key role. The middle-order slot is the most pressing concern. It is the injury status of Shreyas Iyer and K.L. Rahul that has caused this dilemma.

Both batters – currently going through the paces at the National Cricket Academy – are yet to return to competitive action. It would not be wise to rush the duo into a big event like the World Cup.

Until recently, Suryakumar Yadav and Sanju Samson were the front-runners for these spots. Suryakumar's poor returns in ODIs, however, has raised suspicion that the Mumbaikar – a proven match-winner in T20s – is yet to adjust to the demands of 50-over cricket. Samson, meanwhile, has not done himself any favours with his inconsistent run. With scores of 12, 7 and 13 in the recent T20Is against West Indies, the Kerala wicketkeeper-batter has failed to impress.

Fortunately for India, there was a silver lining in the 2-3 T20I series defeat. Southpaw Tilak Varma stood out with a few sparkling knocks, giving hope that the unit has found a suitable middle-order option.

Tilak made 173 runs in five outings – the most by an Indian and third-highest among both teams. The Hyderabad cricketer – taking his first steps in the international arena – looked assured and comfortable at the crease. He displayed a maturity quite unusual for a rookie 20-year-old – going about his business in a quiet and calculative manner.

Tilak, who shot into the limelight as a consistent performer for Mumbai Indians in the IPL, has all the strokes. He gets into position early, and is unafraid to take on the bowlers from the get-go. Tilak reads the game well, making adjustments to his scoring rate as the team requires.

Praise from the head coach

The elegant batter came good with scores of 39, 51, 49 n.o., 7 n.o., and 27 – a coming-of-age showing that earned praise from head coach Rahul Dravid.

"Tilak was really good. He came in to bat in difficult situations and performed well. He batted with positive intent, played aggressively and looked to move the game along. Having a quality left-hander in the batting line-up makes a huge difference when we face different bowling attacks," Dravid said after the T20I leg.

Dravid was pleased that Tilak can contribute as an off-spinner, as seen in the fifth T20I when he took the wicket of Nicholas Pooran. "Tilak also fielded very well throughout the series," Dravid added.

Tilak received the backing of experienced spinner R. Ashwin, who believes that the youngster adds great value to the Indian XI.

"This is neck-and-neck with respect to the World Cup. So, will they (selectors) think about Tilak Varma as an option if we don't have enough backups? Sanju Samson has performed really well in ODIs. But the exciting part about Tilak is that he is a left-hander and Team India is lacking left-handers. Jaddu (Ravindra Jadeja) is the only left-handed batter in the top 7," Ashwin said on his YouTube channel.

> Rohit Sharma has been a great support system for me. He always tell me to enjoy the game, and he helps me handle the pressures of playing international cricket. When we were together at Mumbai Indians, Rohit said that I'm an all-format cricketer. This gave me a huge boost in confidence

Inspiration and mentor

Tilak shares a good relationship with Rohit Sharma, who is his skipper at MI. Tilak counts Rohit as his inspiration and mentor.

"Rohit Sharma has been a great support system for me. He always tell me to enjoy the game, and he helps me handle the pressures of playing international cricket. Rohit and Suresh Raina are my inspiration. When we were together at Mumbai Indians, Rohit said that I'm an all-format cricketer. This gave me a huge boost in confidence," said Tilak after his 41-ball 51 in the second T20I.

Tilak is not one to rest easy on laurels, and is always looking to improve. "International cricket is not easy. You must be consistent to get sustained success. And to be consistent, one must maintain discipline both on and off the field," he said.

Tilak received his India call-up on the back of two great IPL seasons with MI. In the 2022 edition, Varma scored 397 runs at an average of 36.09, before reiterating his class with 342 runs (average 42.88, strike rate 164.11) in the following season.

"The turning point in my career was my performances with MI. I'm here with the Indian team because of my IPL runs. I want to bring that same form and confidence to international cricket," he said.

Dravid and Tilak have a bond that dates a couple of years before his ascent to the Indian team. "Rahul sir has been with me since my India under-19 days. He was our team coach then. He tells me to follow the basics and enjoy the game," he said.

"I've spoken to Hardik (Pandya) as well. Hardik says 'You have done well in IPL and domestic cricket, so just do the same things with the Indian team'," Tilak said.

Tilak will next travel to Ireland for three T20Is. He is also expected to be named in the squad for the 2023 Asia Cup. A few more good performances will only strengthen his case for a World Cup berth.

THE GIST

- Shreyas and Rahul are yet to return to competitive action, and it would be unwise to rush the duo into a big event like the World Cup
- Tilak stood out in the recent 2-3 T20I series defeat with a few sparkling knocks
- Dravid and Tilak have a bond that dates a couple of years before his ascent to the Indian team, with the coach adding that he was pleased that Tilak can contribute as an off-spinner

Anjali Bhagwat lends an element of fun to shooting with Fundook

Kamesh Srinivasan

Anjali Bhagwat is a pioneer in Indian shooting. By reaching the Olympic final in Sydney in air rifle in 2000, on a "hardship quota", Anjali made the whole country take note of the sport. She went on to win a bunch of medals in the global arena. At her best, she was the "Champion of Champions" among the elite men and women.

Even as she has been guiding youngsters in the Olympic sport, Anjali, with her husband Mandar Bhagwat and a battery of engineers, has been able to design and develop Fundook, a laser based shooting system for rifle and pistol.

It is a pellet-less shooting sport, played at a distance of five metres, powered by artificial intelligence (AI), that is safe, accessible, cost-effective with zero maintenance and recurring cost.

"We have Fundook Purple, developed in collaboration with EnAble India and Medallion Foundation. It uses advanced sensors on an electronic target and a patented technology that offers real time, sound-based feedback through a wireless app. This enables visually impaired athletes to aim and shoot with Olympic level accuracy, providing them an opportunity to compete and pursue their passion for the sport," explained Mandar.

While Anjali is a co-founder and brand ambassador, Mandar and team have been able to set up Fundook shooting ranges in Pune, Ahmedabad and Jalandhar. The Fundook arena can easily be set up in homes, offices, schools, colleges and clubs, helping everyone enjoy safe shooting

in familiar environments.

"We will soon be launching new ranges in Bengaluru and Hyderabad apart from establishing a bigger set-up in Pune," said Mandar, who has been working diligently to develop the sport and take it across the country, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Even though it is being introduced as a recreational activity for all, Fundook could be a nice way to start in shooting sport before graduating to the 10, 25 and 50-metre ranges with real rifles and pistols.

"The use of real, national-level weapons fitted with rechargeable laser technology ensures an authentic shooting experience. The original trigger and peep sight mechanism are maintained. The target sizes are calibrated to provide an almost identical target sight picture both with rifle and pistol," explained Anjali.

Moreover, research is on to introduce a "laser spot trainer" that can be mounted on the shooter's regular weapon. This device, designed for professional shooters, integrates with the Fundook App and provides a flexible, convenient way for shooters to train, record and analyse their performance in real time.

"It is fun, as the app helps you compete with others. It also helps one to improve focus, aim, trigger control, body stability. Shooting sport requires a high degree of discipline, patience and mental fortitude. Fundook fosters these qualities, leading to personal development," said Anjali.

This could be ideal for schools, to introduce shooting to the youngsters. There is a provision to generate performance and improvement analytics reports that could help in the identification of high performers who can move on to regular shooting.

It is beneficial for beginners and intermediate level shooters who wish to improve their basic skills.

"It promotes improved focus, concentration, fitness and mind control," observed Mandar.

The electronic sport may have many advantages, but the objective was to have the fun element in shooting to draw the younger generation away "from their screens" and encourage them to engage in a more physically interactive game.

Indian shooting thrives on the world stage as thousands of people in different age groups enjoy their time in the sport. With laser shooting, the sport is bound to become more popular and affordable, leading to a larger pool of talent that can train its sight on Olympic glory.

Students taking part in the Independence Day celebrations at the Manekshaw Parade Grounds in Bengaluru on Tuesday. K. MURALI KUMAR

A tableau by school students. K. MURALI KUMAR

(Top and below) 'Kalaripayattu' being performed by the MEG troop members. K. MURALI KUMAR

Students of Kittur Rani Chennamma Residential School from Belagavi district performing 'rope skipping'. K. MURALI KUMAR

Siddaramaiah warns those disturbing social harmony

He promises to strengthen the new Karnataka development model marked by inclusiveness as against the 'divide and rule' policy and appeales to youth not to yield to provocation

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah used the occasion of Independence Day to issue a warning to those disturbing communal and social harmony. His government will not tolerate spreading false news on social media, disturbing social harmony, and acts done in the name of moral policing and communal goondaism in Karnataka, he said.

Delivering the Independence Day address at the Field Marshal Manekshaw Parade Ground in Bengaluru on Tuesday, the Chief Minister appealed to the people of Karnataka, especially the youth, not to yield to "provocation by vested interests", and to uphold the principle of harmonious life.

"We follow what Jnanpith awardee Kuvempu propagated in his poetry – *Sarva Janangada Shantiya Thota* (peaceful garden of all faiths)," he said. The Chief Minister sent out a political message ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls by promising to strengthen the new "Karnataka development model" marked by inclusiveness as opposed to a divide-and-rule policy. Unlike the State Budget, where he launched a direct offensive against the BJP, the Chief Minister resorted to a veiled attack on BJP and its ideology without naming the opposition party.

> We follow what Jnanpith awardee Kuvempu propagated in his poetry — *Sarva Janangada Shantiya Thota*
>
> **SIDDARAMAIAH**
> Chief Minister

"People of Karnataka have stood against the efforts of divide-and-rule policy. All-inclusive is our policy. Hence, people have chosen us to govern the State," he said. "India belongs to all. It is a country where there is unity in diversity. Citizens of Karnataka are convinced that peace in society is inevitable for development, and hence, rejected deliberate efforts of negative forces."

"Hatred, violence, suspicion, revenge and intolerance are growing. Rather, there are efforts to fuel these traits. Some sections of society are producing these traits and are also projecting that these have acceptance... Only peace and harmony can ensure development. Any society marred by violence, chaos, lack of law and order nurtures poverty," he said.

Expressing concern that despite attaining freedom, there are impediments to inclusive development, as only 10% of people had accumulated 78% of the country's wealth, he said his government had taken up implementation of five guarantee schemes to ensure social justice in terms of accumulation of resources and their redistribution. "We strongly believe in the premise of economist Amartya Sen that development is real freedom. Hence, we have introduced the five guarantee schemes," he said.

On devolution of taxes

The issue of Karnataka not getting Central grants in tune with its tax collection also figured in his speech. "Karnataka is the second-highest tax paying State in India. We are paying over ₹4 lakh crore in the form of taxes and duties to the Centre. However, we are getting just ₹50,000 crore in return from the Centre. Karnataka will be the richest State if we get what we actually deserve," he said.

The Chief Minister's speech was followed by a cultural programme.

Industrial policy to be revamped

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday said that Karnataka's industrial policy will be revamped to make it more progressive. "We dream of transforming Karnataka into the number one State in Asia in terms of modern technology," he said.

The government would also take up other key strategic initiatives such as providing world-class industrial infrastructure, Digital Service Delivery, a best-in-class investment promotion agency, ensuring a future-ready talent pipeline in Karnataka and fostering collaboration and implementing forward-thinking policies, he said.

"In the last 10 years, the industrial sector of the State has registered a 9.3% growth rate. We have set a goal of achieving a 15% to 16% growth rate in the coming days. This requires an investment of about ₹1.4 lakh crore every year and generates 14 lakh new jobs," he said.

'Tent Pegging' performance by the Army Service Corps team. K. MURALI KUMAR

The Army Service Corps team, popularly known as the 'Tornadoes', displaying stunts. K. MURALI KUMAR

MANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED
(Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
O&M Circle, Shakthi Soudha, Bondel, Mangalore-575 015
Tel: 0824-2443549/2444915, CIN: U40109 KA 2002 SGC 030425

NO: SEE/MNG/EE(O)/AEE-2/2023-24/4705-706 DATE : 08.08.2023

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (E-Procurement Portal Only)

MESCOM invites tenders from eligible bidders for following works

Tender No	Description
MESCOM/2023-24/EL/WORK_INDENT27	Repair of failed 5 MVA Power Transformer of 33/11KV Katipalla Sub Station, Surathkal Sub Division, Kavoor Division (Retender of tender no.: MESCOM/2023-24/EL/WORK_INDENT10)
MESCOM/2023-24/EL/WORK_INDENT12/CALL-2	Repair of failed 5 MVA Power Transformer of 33/11KV Attavara Sub Station, Attavara Sub Division, Mangaluru Division
MESCOM/2023-24/EL/WORK_INDENT13	Repair of failed 5 MVA Power Transformer of 33/11KV Subramanya Sub Station, Subramanya Sub Division, Puttur Division

The bids will be received through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only. The detailed tender notification information can be obtained by logging on to **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** on or after **16.08.2023.** Any further details can be obtained from the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer(Ele.), O&M Circle, Mangalore

For Power Related Complaints and Assistance Call Toll Free Number 1912

V.V. Puram's renovated *thindi beedi* misses I-Day date for reopening

Renovation of the street has been going on since December 2022. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Nishita J.
BENGALURU

Bengaluru's popular 'thindi beedi' (food street) in Visveswarapuram (V.V. Puram) has missed its date with Independence Day to be reopened in a renovated form.

As on Tuesday, the street remained partially closed as construction continued. The food street was shut down more than seven months ago and renovation of the street has been going on since December 2022. A majority of the stalls remain shut.

For pedestrians

The street has been converted into a pedestrian-only stretch. However, the promised renovation of the road to make it look similar to Commercial Street has not been completed. "We have incurred a lot of loss because of the shut down and we have not been informed as to when the construction will be completed," said Devraj, a stall owner. He mentioned that the street shut down completely in February and the stall owners were told that the construction will only take place for a period of two months.

"Though there is not much trouble accessing the food stalls, there is a lot of noise at the end of the road due to the ongoing construction," said Nazia, a customer.

With no dedicated parking spaces at the moment, the now pedestrian-only street suffers from overcramping of vehicles at the beginning of the road. The proposed renovations were to include tiles and cobblestones on the roads and pavements along with an addition of seating arrangements for customers. The street was also set to get fixed standing tables, handwash facilities and fixed dustbins. Though the street, located near Sajjan Rao circle, saw customers walking in, construction continued at nearly all parts of the food street.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Tushar Giri Nath, Chief Commissioner, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike, said, "The street will be reopened with proper intimation to everyone. Minor work may have been remaining. Other than that, there is no major reason for the delay."

ISRO achieved record high in last one year, says Somanath

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

ISRO Chairperson S. Somanath said the space agency has achieved a record high in the last one year, not only in terms of launching satellites, but also with regard to the uniqueness of the missions.

Speaking at the celebration of 77th Independence Day at ISRO headquarters here, Mr. Somanath said, "Between the previous Independence Day and now, we've been very, very successful in achieving many missions. Let me thank all of you all across ISRO centres, Department of Space for the wonderful accomplishment you have made in the last one year. Launching satellites, building rockets and launching in numbers, and the numbers are really a record high this year. It is not only the record that we are trying to break, it is the uniqueness of the missions that have been accomplished."

On the Chandrayaan-3 mission, he said that it is being hailed as an important mission and everybody is looking forward to its soft-landing.

"We made a new SSLV rocket successfully. We made the LVM-3 capture the world market in terms of commercial exploitation. We launched the Oceansat-3 satellite, which is an engineering marvel. Aditya-L1 is ready for launch in the next few weeks," Mr. Somanath said.

Future missions

On upcoming missions, he said that the X-ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat) is ready. XPoSat is India's first dedicated polarimetry mission to study various dynamics of bright astronomical X-ray sources in extreme conditions

INSAT-3DS, Gaganyaan test vehicle mission, Gaganyaan unmanned mission, and the Indo-US NISAR (NASA-ISRO) mission are getting ready to be launched this year, and early next year.

KSSIDC KARNATAKA STATE SMALL INDUSTRIES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD.
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
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Telephone: 080-2340 7011 to 25, Fax: 080-23143566
Website: www.kssidc.co.in e-mail: kssidcho@karnataka.gov.in

No: ENGG:SE:ep-74:DPR:Kanagala:Badanaguppe:Indi:2023-24 Date: 16-08-2023

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(REQUEST FOR RPOPOSAL)
(Two tender document system)
(Through GOK e–Procurement Portal only)

The Superintending Engineer, on behalf of Managing Director, KSSIDC through e-procurement system (e-procurement portal) invites Proposals (Technical and Financial) for appointing Consultant for Preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) for Establishment of New Industrial Estate at following places as mention in table below, a notification in this regard is issued No:ENGG:SE:ep74:DPR: Kanagala: Badanaguppe:Indi:2023-24 Date: 16-08-2023

Details of works are as follows

Sl. No	Name of the Project	Apprx. Project Cost in Crores	EMD In Rs.
1	Preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) for Establishment of 3 New Industrial Estate at 1.Kanagala Grama, Sankeshwara Hobli,Hukkeri Tq, Belagavi Dist.Extent of Land 25.0 Acres. (Black cotton Soil) 2. Badanaguppe-Kellamballi Grama, Chamarajanagara Tq, Chamarajanagara Dist. Extent of Land 25.0 Acres and 3. Budihal Grama Ballolli Hobli, Indi Tq, Vijayapura Dist. Extent of Land 19.38 Acres.	33.00	35,000/-

Tender shall be submitted along with EMD by logging in to e-procurement website **https://kppp.Karnataka.gov.in** (Karnataka State Small Industries Development Corporation Limited) through e-procurement portal. The document may be downloaded from 16-08-2023 at 16.00 hours onwards.

Calendar of Events :

- Date of Pre bid meeting at the office Superintendent Engineer on : **22-05-2023 at 15.00 hours**
- Last Date for online Submission of Tender proposal is **25-08-2023 16.30 hours**
- Date of Opening of Technical Proposals is : **28-08-2023 10.00 hours**
- Date of Opening of Financial Proposals after Approval of Technical Proposals through e – Procurement.

DIPR/CP/918/AKAR/2023-24

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer

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LEGAL NOTICE

COURT NOTICE
Before the Subordinate Judge Kozhikode (P) O.S.193/2022

Vijayalakshmi JayanathKumar aged 56 years D/o Radha menon No.44, Green View, Water field Road, Bandra, Mumbai, Maharashtra-400050 — Plaintiff

Latha Jayamohan Menon aged 52 years, D/o Radha menon, Pankaj Villa,1/1 Bore Bank Road, Benson Town, Banglore-560046 Karnataka State — Defendant

Please take notice that the above case is posted to 12.09.2023 for the apperance of defendant, failure to which the above person will be declared exparte.

K.B. SIVARAMA KRISHNAN
Advocate for plaintiff

Reimagining the role of state universities in science education

Today, science education and training at State-affiliated colleges and universities is subpar. The curricula in BSc programmes are largely outdated, with syllabi out of sync with contemporary technologies. These courses also offer insufficient practical training, with inadequate and poorly-maintained laboratory facilities

Karishma Kaushik

By the third anniversary of the National Education Policy 2020, experts and policymakers have lauded its efforts to foster skill-based education and practical learning. With the potential to transform the education landscape, skill development is particularly relevant to higher science education in the country.

In India, students choosing to study science at higher levels complete their Higher Secondary School Certificate (or equivalent) examinations in select science subjects, after which they are eligible for medicine, engineering, and bachelors of science (BSc) courses. While some institutes offer specialised degrees in medicine and engineering, a large segment of science education in India includes BSc-level and subsequent courses.

25 lakh STEM graduates

Following a BSc, students can continue their education via master's and PhD programmes that align with their primary degrees. On the other hand, BSc graduates can also opt for diverse specialisations, including MCA or MBA programmes or the civil service examinations, or endeavour to enter the workforce via jobs in the public or private sectors.

Setting aside medical graduates, India produces over 25 lakh graduates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) every year, across bachelors and masters courses, and accounts for the largest number of students obtaining bachelor-equivalent science degrees worldwide.

Among STEM graduates, the aggregate enrolment of students in BSc courses is close to 50 lakh, with more than 11 lakh students completing their baccalaureate degrees every year, per the All-India Survey of Higher Education Report 2021-2022. However, the number of science graduates drops to 2.9 lakh at the masters level (25% of BSc graduates), and even further at the doctoral level, with only 6,000 science PhDs awarded each year. A PhD, or a master's degree with select eligibility tests, is a prerequisite to entry-level scientific research or teaching positions at universities and national institutes.

Given this, a large number of bachelors-equivalent science graduates in India - some 8 lakh a year - represents the human resources entering the workforce immediately or in the near future.

Notably, the vast majority of bachelors-level science graduates in India earn their primary degrees at State-affiliated colleges and universities, either via three-year BSc courses or integrated BSc-MSc programmes (4-5 years).

University of Calcutta building on College Street, Kolkata. State university education has no connection to the requirements of the job market, say recruiters. ROHIT SHAW27 (CC BY-SA 4.0)

Out of sync

Of the 1,113 universities in India, 422 are public universities managed by State governments, each with several State-affiliated colleges. State-managed universities and their constituent units account for the single-largest share of enrolments (over 30%) across universities in India, most of which are at undergraduate level and with science courses hosting the second highest number of students enrolments after arts. Taken together, State-level science education is a fertile training ground to prepare graduates for the national scientific workforce.

However, the current condition of science education and training at State-affiliated colleges and universities leaves much to be wanted. Foremost, curricula and course content in BSc and other integrated programs are largely outdated, with syllabi out of sync with contemporary technologies. These courses also offer insufficient practical training, with inadequate and poorly-maintained laboratory facilities. Some programmes encourage students to undertake external internships, but brief laboratory sojourns can't substitute rigorous curricular and practical training, and the internships are extremely competitive as well.

> India produces over 25 lakh graduates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics every year, across bachelors and masters courses

A unique mandate

While systemic administrative problems have played a significant role in this bottleneck, State-managed universities also face an existential crisis related to their role in higher science education. Unlike other publicly funded institutes, including 'Institutes of Eminence' (IoEs) such as the IITs and IISERs, State-affiliated colleges and universities cater to more students while grappling with serious resource constraints. So while a revamp of State universities is imperative, it is impractical to expect that they will meet the research metrics of the IoEs or private universities. On the other hand, 'letting teachers teach' in the absence of research programmes or continued upskilling will further risk pedagogical content and practices in these courses.

Against this background, we need to re-envision State-affiliated universities and colleges while providing them with a unique mandate that fulfils the needs of higher science education in India.

In the past, including at the recent Science20 group meetings - the science engagement platform of the G20 - India has shared its vision to build an economy focused on science and technology, a chunk of which includes industries related to information technology, life sciences, chemical engineering, and automation engineering, to name a few. India is also emerging as a growing bio-economy, which includes pharmaceuticals and biomanufacturing, and is expected to have an economic value of $150 billion by 2025. Other industries such as agriculture, mining, and livestock also continue to require scientific and technological advancements.Yet in spite of the large pool of science graduates available in India, scientific industries have reported a challenge with finding people trained well in the relevant skills.

Skill-based education

It is in this context, that State-affiliated universities and colleges could be reimagined as hubs for skill-based science education, with teaching, training, and research that aligns with employability in the scientific sector.

Alongside academic knowledge, BSc or integrated course curricula could focus on industry-relevant skills and certifications, such as programming, data analysis techniques, instrumentation and facility expertise, quality assurance, and benchmarking.

Longstanding collaborations with industry could be built via seminars, apprenticeships, interactions with expert faculty members, job fairs, and funding support. Course-training could also include applying and interviewing for jobs, on-campus interviews, and negotiating salary scales.

The community college and technical university models in the U.S. and Europe standout as examples of publicly-funded universities with strong focus on advancing education in regional communities, while building workforce-ready graduates.

For India, State-affiliated universities and colleges with a focus on skill-based education can serve as a dual solution for the country's need for skilled personnel in the scientific sector and challenges of graduate-level unemployability. This would bridge the goals of the National Education Policy with the proposed National Research Foundation for State-level education, which includes practical training, better utilisation of resources, and access to industrial funding.

Karishma Kaushik is the Executive Director of IndiaBioscience.

THE GIST

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State-affiliated universities and colleges should be hubs for skill-based science education, with teaching, training, and research that aligns with employability in the scientific sector. BSc or integrated course curricula could focus on industry-relevant skills and certifications, such as programming, data analysis techniques, instrumentation and facility expertise, quality assurance and benchmarking

BIG SHOT

Members of the Waorani indigenous community demonstrate to promote a 'yes' vote in an upcoming referendum to end oil drilling in Yasuní National Park, in Quito, on Monday. A caravan of indigenous people and environmentalists will travel through Ecuador ahead of the popular consultation that seeks to stop oil exploitation in an important block of the Park, a rich biosphere reserve and part of the Amazon Basin. AFP

QUESTION CORNER

Cramp and relief

Q: Why do people get cramps and how does massage help?

A1: A cramp is a sudden, painful, and involuntary contraction of a muscle. It generally affects the legs and hands. It can occur due to various reasons, such as metabolic abnormality, severe cold, lack of blood flow, and mineral deficiency.

All these elicit pain or other types of sensory impulses that are transmitted from the muscle to the spinal cord, thus causing reflexive muscle contraction. The contraction in turn stimulates the same sensory receptors more, which causes the spinal cord to increase the intensity of contraction. So a positive feedback mechanism occurs so that a small amount of initial irritation leads to more and more contraction until a full-blown muscle cramp ensues. Massage helps to overcome cramp mainly by stretching the cramped muscle. In other words, it elicits what can be termed as 'reciprocal inhibition' of the muscle. This can at times relieve the cramp.

Nitin Ral Vohra, Hyderabad

Cramp is a reflexive muscle contraction. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

A2: Cramps can occur due to a localised muscle spasm. The pain or uneasiness is caused by nervous irritation due to accumulation of some 'metabolites' or chemicals in that area. Massage – an external compression of muscle – improves blood supply and helps in washing away these metabolites, and thus relieves the cramp. However, not all cramps can be relieved by massages.

Dr. S. Subash Kennedy

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to
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with the subject 'Daily page'

State has 312 operational CNG stations, 1,414 more planned

Bengaluru Urban and Rural districts have set up 89 CNG stations, followed by D.K. that has set up 28

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Under the Minimum Work Programme (MWP), 312 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) stations have been established in Karnataka while the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has set a target to establish 1,414 more CNG stations in the State over the next 8-10 years.

In a reply to a question in the Upper House recently, Union Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Rameswar Teli stated that the establishment of CNG stations is part of the development of City Gas Distribution (CGD) network and the same is carried out by the entities authorised by the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB).

Top five MWP target

Geographical Areas/ CGD Networks	CNG Stations (Nos.)	
	Total MWP Target	Achievement as on 31.05.2023
Bengaluru Rural and Urban districts	NA	89
Dakshina Kannada district	100	28
Mysuru, Mandya, and Chamarajanagar districts	171	23
Bagalkot, Koppal, and Raichur districts	114	24
Ballari and Gadag districts	24	21

Source: PNGRB

"After completion of 11A CGD bidding round, PNGRB has authorised 18 Geographical Areas (GAs), including 1 GA spread over Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka and 1 GA spread over Telangana and Karnataka covering the entire state of Karnataka for the development of CGD network," he stated.

PNGRB is the authority to grant authorisation to the entities to lay, build, operate or expand for the development of CGD or local natural gas distribution networks in Geographical Areas as per the PNGRB Act, 2006.

Meanwhile, according to the data shared by the ministry, Bengaluru Urban and Bengaluru Rural districts have set up 89 CNG stations as on May 31, followed by Dakshina Kannada district which has set up 28 CNG stations.

Delivery personnel robbed

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A delivery personnel with a food delivery platform was robbed by three persons in Pulikeshinagar on Monday afternoon.

The victim was on his way to make a delivery when three bike-borne men blocked his way, threatened him with a knife and fled with his mobile phone and 1,000 cash.

A passerby who saw this posted about the incident on X (formerly known as Twitter) tagging the Bengaluru City Police. Alerted by this, the police have taken up a case.

Drug rackets unearthed

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The city police have busted two drug rackets and arrested three persons, including a Nigerian national.

The V.V. Puram police raided and arrested a Nigerian national allegedly trying to sell drugs at a street corner recently. They recovered ₹20 lakh worth 101 grams of MDMA crystals, a bike and a mobile phone.

In another case, Kamakshipalya police raided and arrested two people hailing from Rajasthan for selling opium in the city.

Timings
BENGALURU

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 16	
RISE 06:07	SET 18:40
RISE 05:56	SET 18:53
THURSDAY, AUG. 17	
RISE 06:08	SET 18:40
RISE 06:44	SET 19:30
FRIDAY, AUG. 18	
RISE 06:08	SET 18:39
RISE 07:30	SET 20:05

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	32	24
Mysuru	32	21
Bengaluru	31	21

Bengaluru Today
31°C Morning will be pleasant. Day will be slight warm and humid. Night will be pleasant. Thunderstorm is likely.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
31°C The weather will be slight warm and humid. Night will be pleasant.Chances of light rain and thundershower.

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THE HINDU
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8.26L footfall at flower show

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Independence Day flower show at Lalbagh Botanical Garden drew to close on Tuesday with 2.45 lakh visitors thronging the garden on the final day. According to officials, a total of 8.26 lakh footfall was registered this year.

During the weekend, about four lakh people bought tickets to take a glimpse of the artistic floral presentation. The show garnered more number of people in the last three days. The Horticulture Department earned ₹3.67 crore from the tickets, ₹27 lakh from stall rent and ₹2.91 lakh from exhibitors entry fee. On Independence Day, long queues were seen at the Lalbagh metro station. Owing to uncontrollable crowd, the department gave free entry on the final day.

E-paper edition

The Hindu offers more coverage of Bengaluru in the e-paper edition. (epaper.thehindu.com)

In the issue dated August 16, we have stories that delve into the various initiatives by Karnataka to mitigate human-animal conflict. The Hindu examines four such efforts in a two-part series.

From Page One

'Entire Purple Line to be operational in Sept.'

The BMRCL is conducting load test of the Open Web Girder (OWG) on the Baiyappanahalli-Krishnarajapura line. Previously, the BMRCL had set August as the deadline to complete the work on the missing 2-km segment.

Due to the missing link, metro passengers have been forced to use a feeder service for a distance of 5 km to reach K.R. Puram after getting down at Baiyappanahalli. Feeder services run by the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) are being utilised by up to 8,000 passengers every day.

Close to 27,000 passengers are using the new K.R. Pura to Whitefield metro line. A major jump in patronage is expected after the BMRCL opens the entire 15.5-km metro line.

800 third semester students get 0 marks

"Most of the colleges have missed entering the internal marks in the UUCMS portal. We ordered an inquiry in this regard and action will be taken against them. Due to some technical reasons, some internal marks have not appeared. Also, we introduced Business Statistics for the first time in our university and most of the private colleges taught the subject effectively. But a majority of the government colleges have failed to do so. This could also be a reason for the poor results. We will sort out this problem in another two or three days," he said.

THE HINDU

OPPORTUNITIES

GENERAL

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He/She must be prepared to join latest by April 2024.

Salary will be based on the 7th PayCommission recommendations, but will not be a constraint for the right candidate.

Candidates may send their CV with names and numbers of two referees to the following email ID
director@vidya-mandir.edu.in
to reach on or before the 4th of September.

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Ref. No. SVC/Principal/2023/ Dated the 6th August, 2023

Online applications are invited in the prescribed Application Form from eligible candidates for appointment to the Post of Principal, in the Academic Pay Level 14 of 7th Central Pay Commission Pay Matrix, in the College. The last date for receipt of application is **5th September, 2023** or two weeks from the date of publication of the advertisement in the Employment News, whichever is later.

The web link of online application form is **https://rec3.uod.ac.in/**

The details regarding qualifications, publications, experience, screening guidelines and indicative proforma etc. are available on the College website **www.svc.ac.in** along with this advertisement. The applicants are required to read these details before filling up the form.

Any addendum/corrigendum shall be posted only on the College Website

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S.V. College Governing Body

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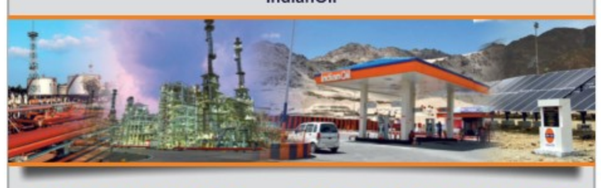

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Note: Applications received in response to the previous advertisement (published in May 2023) shall not be considered and those applicants need to apply afresh.

Last Date for Receipt of Applications : 4th September, 2023

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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Prefabricated houses for those displaced in Manipur

3,000 The Manipur government is constructing prefabricated houses to shelter families displaced by the violence so that they can shift from relief camps. PTI

The number of years since Taliban's return to power

2 In these two years, Taliban authorities have imposed their strict interpretation of Islam, with women bearing the brunt of laws. Restrictions on the rights of women have been key obstacles to recognition and aid. AFP

The number of Rohingyas arrested by Myanmar

150 They were arrested by the Myanmar authorities for trying to flee the country. Last week, a boat carrying around 50 Rohingya broke up in heavy seas off the Myanmar coast. AFP

Adani buys major stake in Quintillion Business Media

51 in percentage. Billionaire Gautam Adani's group will take full control of the Raghav Bahl-curated digital business news platform. Quintillion was Adani's first bet in the Indian news industry. PTI

The number of felony counts charged against Donald Trump

13 Donald Trump was indicted on Monday on charges of racketeering and a string of election crimes after a two-year probe into his efforts to overturn his 2020 defeat. AFP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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The Myanmar junta's empty gestures

The Myanmar army's top decision-makers, currently bunkered in the capital, Naypyidaw, struggle to maintain control of enough territory to seriously contemplate even a heavily stage-managed nationwide poll. Under these volatile conditions, people have been fleeing abroad or taking up arms

WORLD INSIGHT

Nicholas Farrelly
Adam Simpson

In a general amnesty announced on military television last week, Myanmar's military junta removed six years from the jail term of Aung San Suu Kyi, the 78-year-old leader of the government removed by a coup in February 2021. This came a week after the junta moved her into house arrest following a year in solitary confinement. But it still leaves Aung San Suu Kyi facing a 27-year jail term on bogus charges. The junta also lopped four years off former president Win Myint's sentence, and reportedly released more than 7,000 other prisoners.

But we shouldn't be persuaded that the junta has changed its stripes. It regularly uses mass amnesties in attempts to cultivate goodwill, either at home or abroad. But any major figures released in these amnesties shouldn't have been locked up in the first place. The day before the amnesty, the junta extended its state of emergency for a fourth time, further delaying elections, due to relentless opposition to its February 2021 coup. The coup sparked ongoing and widespread violence, and shredded the military's last claims to social esteem. This has left Myanmar impoverished, largely friendless, and without any plan for a positive future.

In chains: A protester holds a poster of detained leader Aung San Suu Kyi in 2021. AFP

Determined resistance

The army's top decision-makers, currently bunkered in the capital, Naypyidaw, struggle to maintain control of enough territory to seriously contemplate even a heavily stage-managed nationwide poll. Under these volatile conditions, people have been voting with their feet by fleeing abroad or taking up arms in a revolutionary mobilisation.

The junta's leader, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, reportedly told the National Defence and Security Council that elections couldn't be conducted due to continued fighting in several regions. The reality for the generals in their fortified compounds is that any poll could further embarrass them – they cannot even reliably rig the national vote. Many areas are off-limits to government forces, perhaps as much as half the country – which is Southeast Asia's second-largest by land area. While aerial bombardments by regime aircraft might set back the resistance, the strategy is hardly a way to win hearts or minds. Inch by inch, the diminution of central government control raises questions about the country's future. There's increasing concern across the Southeast Asian region. An intractable civil conflict presents significant challenges for neighbours Thailand, China, India and Bangladesh. Diplomatic efforts to maintain Myanmar's territorial integrity jostle with the discomfort felt almost everywhere about doing business with a blood-splattered regime.

The regime tries to play the politics of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to its advantage. But even there, sometimes in the company of other autocrats, Myanmar now faces the ignominy of an "empty seat" at the political level. And almost nobody wants to shake hands with regime representatives.

An unnecessary crisis

It's a precipitous erosion of what was, until the coup, a relatively positive story for most Myanmar people. Before the coup, the most problematic issue was the military's abuses of the Rohingya, a Muslim ethnic minority living in westernmost Myanmar.

Other issues – such as longstanding ethnic grievances and yawning economic inequality – were, at the very least, subject to open debate in the media and sometimes in the country's 16 regional and national legislatures. That political and social infrastructure, and the emerging civil society it helped sustain, has now crumbled. It's been replaced by violence, mistrust, terror and martial chauvinism. Myanmar's young talent now banned from universities, bravely disobedient in the faces of tanks and bullets, face dismal options: the mountains, the jungle, the border. Some lie low. Others still seek to fan the revolutionary spark. Many are now in jail, others dead. The military, of course, blames its opponents for the devastation its coup unleashed. That sad fact hides a tremendous political and cultural miscalculation. It's unclear whether Myanmar can recover from the army's self-inflicted wounds. Some speculate the whole system will collapse, making it impossible for powerbrokers to keep up the flimsy charade of state power. It has all the ingredients of a failed state.

No way out

The decision to abandon the proposed elections, followed by last week's amnesty, is hardly a surprise. But it does reveal the fragility of the military system and the paranoia of the men in charge. It's also further evidence that nobody can trust the junta. Not only has it broken the faith of the Myanmar people, it constantly tests the patience of foreign governments, even those that offer some sympathy for its self-sabotage.

With Aung San Suu Kyi and other senior members of the democratically elected government still locked up, the reality facing the generals is they will never beat her at any election. They are still betting that eventually the world – and, most importantly, their near neighbours – will lose interest and allow some type of partial rehabilitation. Maintaining links with China and Russia is a key strategy. Still, there's no obvious path to fuller inclusion in ASEAN while the generals unleash such violence against their own people. The extension of the state of emergency and postponement of hypothetical elections will further invigorate resistance forces hoping to steadily weaken the army's grip on power. A pointless reduction in the jail sentences for Myanmar's elected leaders is unlikely to quell the fires of opposition now burning across the country.

(Nicholas Farrelly is Head of Social Sciences, University of Tasmania and Adam Simpson is Senior Lecturer, International Studies, University of South Australia. This article has been taken from The Conversation)

THE GIST

- In a general amnesty announced on military television last week, Myanmar's military junta removed six years from the jail term of Aung San Suu Kyi.
- But we shouldn't be persuaded that the junta has changed its stripes. It regularly uses mass amnesties in attempts to cultivate goodwill, either at home or abroad.
- The junta's leader reportedly told the National Defence and Security Council that elections couldn't be conducted due to continued fighting in several regions. The reality for the generals in their fortified compounds is that any poll could further embarrass them — they cannot even reliably rig the national vote.

Why is the Cauvery water sharing issue flaring up again?

What prompted the Tamil Nadu government to move the apex Court? How has the Karnataka CM reacted?

T. Ramakrishnan

The story so far:

On August 14, the Tamil Nadu government sought the Supreme Court's intervention to make Karnataka immediately release 24,000 cubic feet per second (cusecs) from its reservoirs and ensure the availability of the specified quantity of water at Biligundlu on the inter-State border for the remainder of the month. It also urged the Court to direct Karnataka to ensure the release of 36.76 TMC (thousand million cubic feet) stipulated for September 2023 as per the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT)'s final award of February 2007 that was modified by the SC in 2018.

How is the water being shared?

A monthly schedule is in place for Karnataka, the upper riparian State of the Cauvery basin, to release water to Tamil Nadu. As per the schedule, Karnataka is to make available to Tamil Nadu at Biligundlu a total quantity of 177.25 TMC in a "normal" water year (June to May). Of this quantity, 123.14 TMC is to be given during the period from June to September, also marking the season of the southwest monsoon. Invariably, it is during this period that the Cauvery issue gets flared up, when the monsoon yields lower rainfall than anticipated. After the SC gave its judgment in February 2018 on the CWDT's 2007 award, the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) and Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) were established four months later to ensure the implementation of the judgment. Since then, the two bodies have been holding meetings to take stock of the situation.

Why has T.N. approached the SC?

The CWMA, at its meeting on August 11, wanted Karnataka to manage its releases in such a way that 10,000 cusecs of water was realised at Biligundlu for the next 15 days, starting from August 12. In other words, Karnataka would have to provide 0.86 TMC a day or 12.9 TMC totally in the 15 days. The Authority also decided that based on future rainfall, there would be a re-evaluation of the quantity to be released. But, what apparently irked Tamil Nadu was the refusal of Karnataka during the meeting to abide by the quantity that was agreed upon at the meeting of the CWRC the previous day– which was a figure of 15,000 cusecs for 15 days. However, Karnataka, during the Authority's meeting, said it would release only 8,000 cusecs, and that too up to August 22.

How has Karnataka responded?

Karnataka has contended that lower rainfall in the Cauvery catchment including in Kerala has led to the poor inflow to its own reservoirs. On Saturday, in Mysuru, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah told journalists that whenever additional water flowed into the reservoirs, Karnataka was releasing it to Tamil Nadu. But, this year, Karnataka was not in such a position, he conceded. According to data of the Meteorological Department, Kodagu, the district cited by Mr. Siddaramaiah for the deficit rainfall (the Cauvery originates from there), received 44% less rainfall during June 1-August 15 than what it was expected to experience. Also, Karnataka, at the Authority's meeting, had refused to accept the demand of Tamil Nadu for following a distress-sharing formula, even though its Chief Minister, in Mysuru, favoured the idea of sharing distress.

What lies next?

Tamil Nadu, especially its farmers in the Cauvery delta, is eagerly awaiting to see whether Karnataka will go at least by the decision of the Authority. The present storage of the Mettur reservoir in Tamil Nadu is precariously low with about 20 TMC, which will last only 10 days after giving allowance for dead storage and drinking water requirements, even though water will be required at least for one more month for the standing short-term crop, *kuruvai*. It remains to be seen how the Supreme Court is going to view the matter.

A distress-sharing formula, acceptable to all, seems to be the need of the hour.

THE GIST

- On August 14, the Tamil Nadu government sought the Supreme Court's intervention to make Karnataka immediately release 24,000 cubic feet per second (cusecs) from its reservoirs and ensure the availability of the specified quantity of water at Biligundlu on the inter-State border for the remainder of the month.
- Karnataka has contended that lower rainfall in the Cauvery catchment including in Kerala has led to the poor inflow to its own reservoirs.
- Tamil Nadu, especially its farmers in the Cauvery delta, is eagerly awaiting to see whether Karnataka will go at least by the decision of the Authority.

INBRIEF

Names for Council seats may be sent to Governor today

The Congress is learnt to have finalised the names of former Ministers Umashree and M.R. Seetharam, besides Sudham Das, for the three vacant seats in the Legislative Council. The Chief Minister's Office sources said that the names are likely to be dispatched to the Governor's office on Wednesday to complete the process of nomination.

Party sources said that Ms. Umashree's name was the latest addition to the list, as the name of Mr. Mansoor Ali Khan, son of former Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman and former Union Minister K. Rahman Khan, was dropped from the original list. They said that Ms. Umashree was the choice of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah as the candidate.

The three seats fell vacant due to the retirement of P.R. Ramesh, Kondajji Mohan and C.M. Lingappa, who retired after completing their term.

Gowda is Vice-Chairperson with Cabinet rank of SITK

Rajeev Gowda

M.V. Rajeev Gowda has been appointed the Vice-Chairperson with a Cabinet rank of the State Institute For The Transformation of Karnataka (SITK), said a release.

SITK was previously known as the State Planning Board and is Karnataka's equivalent of the NITI Aayog. The Chief Minister is the Chairperson of SITK.

Professor Gowda is a public policy expert, economist and academician. He represented Karnataka in the Rajya Sabha between 2014-20. He is Chairman of the Indian National Congress's Research Department. He was Convener of its Manifesto Committee for the 2019 election, and is a National Spokesperson.

Erratic rainfall, lower production, hike in MSP raise price of rice by 15%

Sharper hike seen in rice used for making idli, dosa and used mostly by BPL families; traders say export ban, though delayed, brought some stability

Sharath S. Srivatsa
BENGALURU

Farmers transplanting rice saplings in Khanapur in Belagavi district. FILE PHOTO

For people in predominantly rice-consuming regions, the last few weeks have been tough as the price of rice has increased on an average by 15%.

A slew of reasons – including lower production due to heavy rainfall last year, fears over the impact of delayed monsoon this year on production, and a general increase in the minimum support price for paddy – have all contributed to a spurt in the price of rice, industry experts say.

Extent of price rise

The price of rice in Bengaluru started moving upwards from the second week of July. The wholesale price of sona masuri, a popular variety consumed in Karnataka, has reached ₹60 per kg from the earlier ₹48 to ₹50 per kg and the retail price is normally at least 10% above the wholesale price. Rajamudi, a popular variety in South Karnataka, that costs between ₹62 and ₹64 a kg, now costs between ₹70 and ₹74 a kg.

"There is a big concern about the paddy production in the light of erratic rainfall. Sowing is yet to be completed owing to deficient rainfall in several places. Regular rice such as steam rice and raw rice among others have seen an increase by 20%," Ramesh Chandra Lahoti, Chairman of Yeshwanthpur APMC Yard Coordination Committee, said. "The rice used for idli, dosa and those used by BPL families has increased from about ₹30 a kg to ₹36 a kg, which is about 20%. This has been the sharpest increase in the price of rice in recent times."

When it may go down

The industry sources said that the price is expected to thaw by November when the Kharif season harvest is completed. While the supply has tightened in Karnataka, rice is also coming into the State at a higher rate from Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh, according to rice traders. The price, industry experts say, has now somewhat stabilised after the Centre imposed a ban on exports of non-basmati rice.

According to B.V. Krishna Rao, president of Rice Exporters' Association, the price of white rice increased this year as the Centre revised the minimum support price by 7% for paddy as it increased the MSP from ₹2,040 per quintal to ₹2,183 per quintal. "Generally, the prices move up between June and August, and this year it is more due to increased MSP. The stocks also dwindled due to rainfall-related crop damage in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkand last year. The ban on exports will cool down prices and the price will come down between ₹2 and ₹4 per kg depending on the variety." The ban on export of white rice will help in bringing down the prices as 80% of the rice consumed in the country is white rice, he added.

In Karnataka farmers grow "preferred variety of rice" that is of higher quality, and do not contribute to the Food Corporation of India basket. However, the increase in MSP that mostly attracts "PDS variety" also pushed up the prices of the "preferred variety" in Karnataka, Mr. Rao explained.

What millers say

Meanwhile, shortage of paddy in the market is being felt by the rice millers in the State as sufficient quantity of paddy is not available. "Paddy stock with millers is down. Sufficient stock build up did not happen during the harvest time last year. Large quantities of paddy also went from Karnataka to other states soon after the harvest," said N.R. Srinivas, Vice-President of Karnataka State Rice Millers' Association. Blaming the delay in banning the exports of non-Basamati rice and fall in production last year due to heavy rains for the current situation, he said, "Procurement of paddy from other states is also difficult since the current problem is a national phenomenon."

Belagavi may be divided into three districts, says Satish Jarkiholi

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Belagavi district is so huge that residents of some villages have to travel 120 km to reach the district headquarters. FILE PHOTO

The State government is considering a proposal to create Gokak and Chikkodi districts by carving up Belagavi district, Satish Jarkiholi, Minister for Public Works, who is also in-charge of the district, said in Belagavi on Tuesday.

"This issue was raised during Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's recent meeting with MLAs from northern Karnataka. The demand for carving up Belagavi district was put forth by several legislators. The government is seriously considering this suggestion," he said.

The demand was first raised in 1997 when some new districts were created. "The J.H. Patel government announced the division of Belagavi district, but did not implement it owing to opposition by local Kannada groups. But this time, we are likely to go ahead as all their concerns have been addressed," Mr. Jarkiholi told journalists. He, however, added, "No decision has been taken yet on when it will happen, or on the exact process of division."

The sheer size of Belagavi district puts administration out of reach of residents and officials say dividing the district would lead to ease of administration. With an area of 13,500 sq.km, Belagavi is the biggest district in Karnataka in terms of size. In terms of population, Belagavi is the second biggest in Karnataka after Bengaluru Urban district.

Population and size

As per the 2011 census, Belagavi district had a population of 47.8 lakh. Its estimated population in 2023 is 54.2 lakh. The district stretches from the Western Ghats on the west to the dry, north-interior plains on the east. It has three agro climatic zones. The district has 18 Assembly constituencies, 14 taluks, and 506 gram panchayats covering 1,380 villages.

Residents of Belagavi district are electors in three Lok Sabha seats – Belagavi, Chikkodi and Canara. The widespread area of the district makes administration tough and makes access to officials difficult for residents of far-flung areas.

Residents of some villages, like Kattalagi in Athani taluk, or Udachamma Nagar in Ramdurg taluk, have to travel 120 km to reach the district headquarters.

High Court refuses to quash LCA data theft case against aerospace engineer

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Observing that instances of theft of secret defence data and sale of stolen data on the dark web have become worrisome for nations, the High Court of Karnataka has refused to quash a criminal case registered against an aerospace engineer for allegedly stealing sensitive data on the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) programme and secretly selling the data on the dark web.

"It is necessary to investigate the root of data thieving, and bring to book persons involved in acts of uploading sensitive data of defence of the nation on to the dark web, and deal with them with an iron hand," Justice M. Nagaprasanna observed.

The necessity to regulate the usage of the dark web has become the need of the hour, as it provides anonymity, as the geo location is hidden, the court said.

Case background

The court passed the order while rejecting a petition filed by 27-year-old Siva Rama Krishna Chennuboina, who was arrested in March, 2022, on the allegation of stealing confidential data of the LCA Tejas programme belonging to the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), which in September, 2021, had lodged a complaint about data theft and its leak in a different domain.

The petitioner, a Bachelor of Technology (Aerospace Engineering), was arrested on March 19, 2022, four days before he was supposed to appear for an interview for the post of Senior Technical Officer, Grade-III, in the National Aerospace Laboratory on March 23, 2022.

The court noted that the petitioner had worked as an intern at Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd.'s Aircraft Research and Design Centre during 2015-16 and in 2017; and as an intern in the Department of Aerospace Engineering of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, four months during 2016 when he was pursuing his B.Tech course.

Later, he had undergone training in the project "Stress Analysis of Gun Installation for a Typical Fighter Aircraft" at IISc. The ADA had entrusted certain projects of the LCA programme to IISc and the petitioner had worked as an intern and trainee in the IISc's department, which had undertaken the projects associated with the LCA programme, the court noted.

The petitioner was allowed to work as an intern in the preparation of code for the LCA and during this period, he had stolen the data and later he put it on the dark web, the court was informed.

Booked in 2021

It was in 2021 that the Ministry of Defence noticed some foul play and leak of the data related to the ADA, based on which complaint was lodged.

As the investigation is in the last stage, the court asked the Criminal Investigation Department of the State government to complete the probe within four months.

Abetment case against colleagues of LGBT employee who ended life allegedly due to harassment will not be quashed: HC

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Observing that the precious life of a 35-year-old man, who belonged to the LGBT community, was lost owing to remarks on his sexual orientation, the High Court of Karnataka refused to quash, at this early stage of the probe, a criminal case registered against three of his colleagues for alleged abetment to suicide.

Justice M. Nagaprasanna passed the order while rejecting petitions filed by Deputy General Manager (Marketing) Malathy S.B., Vice-President (HR) Kumar Suraj, and Manager (Marketing) Nitish Kumar, at Lifestyle International Private Limited, Bengaluru.

The deceased, Vivek Raj, was a Manager (Visual Merchandise) in Lifestyle International. He had ended his life in his apartment in Bengaluru on June 3 after lodging a complaint against the petitioners accusing them of harassing him at the workplace because he belonged to the Dalit community. While registering the case, the police booked the accused-petitioners under provisions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. However, the High Court had stayed further proceedings on this case.

Complaint by father

After Vivek's death, the police registered another FIR based on a complaint lodged by his father. In the second FIR, the accused-petitioners were booked under Section 306 (abetment of suicide) of the Indian Penal Code.

At this point, the accused-petitioners filed a petition seeking a stay on the investigation.

Pointing out that the petitioners had filed the petition within three days of registration of FIR under Section 306, the court said that the dispute around the facts surrounding the role of the petitioners in the death of Vivek Raj necessitates an investigation at the very least. Hence, the court refused to quash the FIR, as the investigation was at the initial stage.

Meanwhile, the court observed, "The deceased belonged to the LGBT community. The sensitivity of them being ostracised pervades in their psyche. Therefore, such people must be treated with all love and affection, and not point at the infirmity that they have no control of. If every citizen would treat such citizens with all love and care, as is done to a normal human, precious lives would not be lost." The court also said, "It is necessary that every one of us introspect on this issue. After all, every one of them are human beings, and all are worthy of equality."

Based on the contents of a series of emails addressed by Vivek Raj to his higher-ups from February till June 2023, the court noted that he was being allegedly treated inappropriately as he belonged to the LGBT community, and he was repeatedly questioned on his sexuality by some of his colleagues. While dismissing the petition, the court said that it is not appropriate to quash the FIR at the initial stage, as a probe is essential to ascertain abetment.

(Those in distress or those having suicidal tendencies can call Arogya Sahayavani Ph.: 104 for help.)

'Reconsider decision on NEP'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Senior BJP leader and former CM Basavaraj Bommai on Tuesday appealed to CM Siddaramaiah to reconsider his decision of scrapping the National Education Policy from the next academic year. Speaking to the media in Bengaluru, Mr. Bommai said the Congress government will be doing a "disservice to the children of Karnataka" by doing away with NEP. "For petty political reasons, Mr. Siddaramaiah wants to bring in a new system. It is detrimental to the future of children of Karnataka," he claimed.

₹1 lakh crore priority sector advances made

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Banks in Karnataka have made priority sector advances of ₹1,08,811 crore, accounting for 29.72% of the total advances in India made by the banking industry, in the first quarter of fiscal 2024, said a media release by Canara Bank.

Agriculture accounted for 26.66% at ₹47,309 crore while MSE/MSME sectors received a major chunk of 43.38% at ₹57,317 crore.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

P.BASKARAN NAIR(90), Retired Canteen Cleaner, The Hindu, Chennai passed away on 15-08-2023. Address: Vellayath House, PO Kattukulam (South), (Via) Thiruvazhiyede, Palakkad- 679514. Contact : 72999 69100

SAD DEMISE

R.Somasundaram (Age 92)
Retd Dir, ALISDA Min of Defence
Passed away on 15.08.2023
Final rites on 16.08.2023, 10 AM at Bengaluru Banashankari Crematorium.
Mourned by **Family. Ph: 9900092361**

Department of Information & Public Relations
Office of the Commissioner,
Vartha Soudha, No.17, Bhagawan Mahaveer Road, (Infantry Road), Bangalore-560001, Phone: 080-22028048, E-Mail: cpinfodept@gmail.com

No.DIPR/CPD/C-1/AES/2023-24 Date: 16.08.2023

INVITATION OF APPLICATIONS FOR EMPANELMENT OF ADVERTISING AGENCIES

Department of Information & Public Relations invites applications for Empanelment of Advertising Agencies for calendar period 2024 and 2025 from INS Accredited agencies for Preparation of Design / Publishing of Advertisements of people friendly Schemes, Achievements and Various Programmes of Govt. of Karnataka through Various media in order to create awareness among the people.

Interested Advertising agencies can obtain application from **Deputy Director, Commercial Publicity Dept, Bangalore from 17.08.2023 to 15.09.2023 during 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM. Filled application can be submitted at the above office on or before 22.09.2023, 4.00 PM** with Envelope duly Superscribed as **"Application for Empanelment of Advertising Agencies for Department of Information & Public Relations".** The Pre - Qualified agencies have to Submit their profile and Performance of the agency within Prescribed date.

Application can be obtained by payment of **Rs.5,000/- (Five Thousand Only)** through Khajane - 2 under Head of Account 0220-60-800-02-000 (Purpose - other Items - Information & Sub - Purpose - Empanelment charges). The Payment has to be paid to **"Commissioner, Department of Information & Public Relations, Bangalore"** and the same application form can be obtained by submission of payment receipt.

Sd/-
Commissioner
Department of Information and Public Relations.

DIPR/CP/927/2023-24

ABSTRACT

Analysing the crisis of democracy in post-colonial countries

Countries that want to arrest democratic backsliding would be more successful if they have a vibrant civil society and strong links between civil society and political parties

G. Sampath

Heller, Patrick (2023). Parties, Civil Society and Democratic Deepening: Comparing India, Brazil and South Africa, Studies in Indian Politics 11 (1) 10-26. 2023

Democracies around the world are in regression mode. Debates on the crisis of democracy typically draw on the experience in OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries. The focus is on the effects of globalisation and how the economic marginalisation of the lower classes has bolstered support for rightwing populism. But in this paper, political sociologist Patrick Heller argues that "the sources of rightwing populism in post-colonial democracies are very different" than in the Global North and "the consequences are much more serious".

According to Heller, reactionary politics in post-colonial democracies are not merely "challenges to the liberal norms and institutions of democracy as in the OECD world, but also concerted efforts to control and even repress civil society and to sustain the power and influence of dominant class-led coalitions." He makes his case through a comparative study of three countries – India, South Africa and Brazil – all of which share similar structural and historical characteristics and have experienced major crises in democracy.

A steady descent: BJP supporters attend an election campaign rally in Agartala on February 13. PTI

How the Global South differs

What are the reasons for the democratic crises in these post-colonial nations? Heller answers this question with a four-part thesis. First, he points out that a balance between political and civil society is critical for the sustenance of democratic institutions and practices. Second, democratic crisis is a symptom of the failure to incorporate the "subproletariant" – the masses who remain outside the realm of capitalist accumulation – into the economic and social mainstream. Third, it is when the subproletariat begin to make some economic and political gains through collective mobilisation that traditionally dominant elites form a reactionary social coalition. And lastly, democratic backsliding reaches a crisis point when the reactionary social coalition, having consolidated its grip on state power, starts to "subvert democratic institutions and practices in order to preserve or restore their social and economic privileges".

Most post-colonial democracies were born of "passive revolutions" – independence movements that preserved elite power and "largely left intact the colonial developmental legacies of an unincorporated mass subproletariat". In India, the 'subproletariat' refers to the surplus mass of rural and urban unemployed/underemployed trapped in the informal sector. Even with all the economic growth that India has achieved since Independence, Indian democracy is yet to achieve "a degree of material incorporation of labouring classes in a private property economy" – a failing it shares with South Africa and Brazil. This failure, according to Heller, is linked to the nature of dominant political parties or regimes and their relationship to nationalism.

In India, South Africa and Brazil "electoral democracy was ushered in by broad-based but elite-dominated political formations." In India, it was the Congress, in post-apartheid South Africa, it was the African National Congress (ANC), while in Brazil it was the Estado Novo. All three gave only limited representation to sections of the popular classes.

But some of these nationalist parties also pre-empted the emergence of political formations that have more effectively incorporated the masses. In this regard, it is Brazil that breaks ranks with India and South Africa with the coming to power in 2002 of Lula's Workers' Party (PT - *Partido dos Trabalhadores*). PT undertook substantial measures to incorporate the working masses into the economic mainstream through a combination of institutional, welfare and labour reforms. Of course, it was the empowerment of the subproletariat during this period that sparked the reaction which culminated in the election of the neo-fascist Bolsonaro regime in 2018. Yet, it was the work done by the PT over the 14 years it was in power that enabled it to build a coalition of the poorer classes which voted it back to power in 2022.

But the questions arises: what is it about Brazil that, first, enabled the PT to incorporate the subproletariat far more than either India and South Africa have managed to do, and second, fight back and win against the reactionary charge led by Bolsonaro?

Brazil's exceptionalism

According to Heller, what sets Brazil apart from India and South Africa is the nature of the historical relationship between the party system and civil society, and here, ironically enough, Brazil owes its higher democratic resilience to two decades of military rule (1964-84). The military preserved the form, if not the substance, of electoral democracy by sponsoring "two political parties – a government party and an opposition party – that competed in regular elections." This resulted in the party system losing credibility in the eyes of the masses, who mobilised independently through civil society organisations.

As a growing middle class became increasingly disenchanted with the lack of political freedoms, it joined hands with workers movements battling for higher wages, and various rights-based movements. These movements, acting as a broad-based coalition, brought the authoritarian era to an end, ushering in democracy. And when the PT came to power in 2002, they continued to exert power, resulting in a number of reforms that led to real democratic deepening over an uninterrupted period of 14 years.

In contrast, in South Africa and India, the prevalence of political society (the Congress and BJP in India and the ANC in South Africa) over popular civil society "has sustained dominant social pacts." In South Africa, the ANC, belying its idealistic and inclusive origins in the anti-apartheid mobilisation, has "orchestrated an alliance of white capital and a rising black middle class that has come at the expense of pursuing a more transformative project of class and racial inclusion". In India, the Congress and the BJP, for all their differences, have both enjoyed electoral success "on the strength of a social pact that links corporate and landed interests to a broadening middle class." Their efforts at inclusion were predicated on top-down state intervention which only ensured the "subsistence of the vast population outside the circuits of capitalist accumulation".

The rise of the BJP

In India, the 1980s saw the political emergence of new parties that were able to articulate lower caste aspirations in a manner that the hegemonic Congress could not. This 'second democratic uprising' triggered a 'reaction' from the upper castes, and the BJP emerged. The flowering of the BJP as a vehicle of 'elite revolt' happened at the same time as the Congress began to fragment internally. When it returned to power in 2004, the Congress was more "an assemblage of opportunistic rent-seekers and assorted political scions" than a party with a programme.

And yet, thanks to a section of the party leadership's close relationship with civil society actors, it managed to push through remarkable rights-based laws as well as policies designed to universalise access to food and education. However, in contrast to the PT, which used its welfare measures to secure the electoral support of the precarious workforce, the UPA failed to translate welfare reforms into votes. As Heller puts it, "This failure reflects the organisational and ideological disarray of the Congress, and more broadly the fact that the Congress has limited links to civil society, and in particular no real ties to popular organisations." And it is this limitation of the Congress that opened the space for the BJP's traditional urban middle classes to align with "elements of an emerging neo-middle class, including upwardly mobile OBCs and Dalits, forging an ethno-nationalist coalition predicated on Muslim exclusion." The Congress's failure to consolidate a redistributive class coalition "paved the way for a reactionary regime which now threatens the very foundations of Indian democracy".

Heller backs up this hypothesis by pointing out that the BJP failed to make inroads in States such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu due to sub-nationalist governments that have built social democratic and populist welfare regimes on the basis of lower class/caste mobilisation. Even in Odisha and West Bengal, "concerted efforts by the BJP to win at the state level on a communalist platform were repelled by regional parties that banked support for their state-level models of welfarism." Wherever state-level political alignments have had some success in incorporating popular classes, "the BJP has failed to make electoral headway."

It is, thus, not surprising that since returning to power in 2019, the BJP has been repurposing the modest welfare state from a rights-based logic of distribution in which citizens receive entitlements, to a "neo-patrimonial logic in which beneficiaries (labhartis) are rewarded by the largess of the state, which is itself identified with the person of Modi." Additionally, the BJP has also undermined the UPA-era logic of linking welfare with citizen participation and democratisation of local institutions, to increasing reliance on centralised IT-systems. This combination of centralisation and neo-patrimonialisation – alongside efforts to discredit state-level welfare schemes measures as 'freebies' – aims to pre-empt the possibility that demand-making from below could develop into a form of subproletarian political mobilisation.

The need for a robust civil society

According to Heller, so long as large segments of the population remain socially and economically excluded – a challenge that the decades of Congress rule failed to address – the stability of the democratic order would remain at risk. The tensions that arise from this exclusion would be played out in a balance between civil society and political parties. We saw this in the Indian context with the anti-CAA and anti-farm law protests. With a lacklustre political Opposition, the only two instances where the BJP regime at the Centre publicly backed down was when civil society formations rose in revolt.

Heller concludes that where the balance between the parties and civil societies favour the former, the democratic crisis would worsen. It is, therefore, not unexpected that the BJP government has been on the offensive against civil society organisations, for as the paper points out, "a weakened or contained civil society is less likely to be able to push back against the authoritarian impulses."

But where the balance favours civil society, the "parties are more likely to seek genuine accommodations with the popular classes, and such accommodations mark an advance in democratic deepening." Countries that want to arrest democratic backsliding would be more likely to taste success if they have a vibrant civil society, and strong, organic links between civil society and political parties that uphold liberal, democratic values.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

The Amazon rainforest, covering much of Brazil, is the world's largest tropical rainforest. Here is a quiz on the forest famed for its biodiversity

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1
In 2005, some parts of the Amazon Basin — which hosts the rainforest — suffered their worst drought in a century. The condition highlighted how close parts of the region were to turning into a _____, in a process colloquially called a 'dieback'. Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 2
In 1867, the Brazilian government opened up the Amazon rainforest for commercial activity in certain parts. Subsequently, the fortunes of one city in Peru improved tremendously as it became the centre of rubber extraction and trade, with its population increasing 100x in 50 years. Name this city.

QUESTION 3
A study published in 2014 disagreed that the peak of the Nevado Mismi was X — a distinction it had borne for around two decades. Instead, the study conferred the distinction to the Mantaro river of Peru, thus also increasing the length of the Amazon river by around 80 km. What is the distinction (X)?

QUESTION 4
The Amazon rainforest is no stranger to superlatives. One of them is that it is the world's largest example of a _____. Another famous example of such an ecosystem is the Sundarbans across India and Bangladesh. Fill in the blanks.

QUESTION 5
Name the member of the Waorani Nation who is celebrated for initiating a lawsuit against the Ecuadorian government that resulted in a 2019 ruling that protected Waorani land from oil extraction.

Visual question:
This is Mount Roraima, a famous tepui, or tabletop mountain, in the Amazon Basin. It may have inspired Arthur Conan Doyle to write which book? WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. These Asian countries celebrate their independence from Japan on August 15. **Ans: South and North Korea**
2. On August 15, this person took vows, leading to the creation of the Society of Jesus. **Ans: Ignatius of Loyola**
3. Name the famous amusement park and gardens in Copenhagen. **Ans: Tivoli Gardens**
4. In 1914, SS Ancon, became the first vessel to sail through this passageway. **Ans: Panama Canal**
5. On August 15, 1975, the founding father of this nation was killed. **Ans: Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of Bangladesh**
6. This is known as the 'Gyokuon-hoso'. **Ans: The radio broadcast of surrender given by Hirohito, the emperor of Japan**
Visual: Name this famous writer-poet born on August 15. **Ans: Sir Walter Scott**
Early Birds: M. Suresh Kumar| Manasi Roy| Debarati Kar
Please scan this link for answers to the August 14 edition of the daily quiz: bit.ly/quizaug14

Word of the day

Plaudit:
enthusiastic approval; expressing a favourable opinion

Synonyms:
eclat, acclaim, acclamation

Usage:
Even though he had not done much for the cause, he acknowledged the plaudits of the crowd.

Pronunciation:
bit.ly/plauditpro

International Phonetic Alphabet:
/ˈplɔːdɪt/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Taming trunks and tempers: Initiatives from Karnataka to mitigate man-elephant conflicts

A bunch of researchers from the State are leading initiatives that strive to mitigate instances of conflicts with the help of technology. The Hindu looks at four such efforts in a two-part series

JUMBO STRIDES - 1

Shilpa Elizabeth
BENGALURU

Data from the latest elephant census report released by the Karnataka Government on August 9 must have been music to the ears of jumbo lovers. As per the report, the number of wild elephants in Karnataka has gone up to 6,395 from 6,049 in 2017.

However, the report also noted that 161 of them were spotted in private lands such as coffee estates.

As much as the state takes pride in having the highest number of elephants in the country, human-elephant conflicts have been a persistent issue.

Mindless urban expansion at the cost of forest cover and elephant habitats, and infrastructural developments blocking movement of elephants have forced behavioural changes in elephants and increased instances of humans being exposed to the beasts. More often than not this results in conflicts. And very often it proves fatal for one or the other.

According to data from the Union Environment Ministry, 112 people died in Karnataka in the last four years as a result of elephant attacks. Across India, more than 1,500 people lost lives in the last three years due to elephant attacks, and 494 elephants were killed due to train accidents, electrocution, poaching, and poisoning in the last five years.

The numbers may look bleak, but the silver lining is that researchers from Bengaluru and Karnataka are leading initiatives that strive to mitigate instances of human-elephant conflicts with the help of science and technology.

A Rocha India uses research as an important tool to guide its efforts and understand the issues more holistically.

Dr. Avinash Krishnan, director of A Rocha India.

Elephants would move through the plantations to reach rainforest fragments inside them. GANESH RAGHUNATHAN

Putting Bannerghatta on conservation map

Shilpa Elizabeth
BENGALURU

Bannerghatta National Park, a part of one of the largest scrub forests in India, covers an area of about 260 km sq and is only about 27 km from Bengaluru. The 2023 elephant census suggested the presence of about 127 elephants in the area which also sees frequent incidents of human elephant conflicts.

The Bannerghatta-Hosur area of the Eastern Ghats, which comprises three protected areas including the Bannerghatta national park, the Cauvery North Wildlife Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu), and the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary, is the focal area of intervention of A Rocha India. The organisation's conservation efforts span this 2,500 sqkm area which has about 1,500 elephants.

Dr. Avinash Krishnan, director of A Rocha India, notes that while elephant conservation has always been a key mandate in India, the Bannerghatta-Hosur area didn't receive much attention like other areas such as Bandipore until the early 2000s.

"If you look at the recent annual forest department report, Bangalore Circle where Bannerghatta is has the highest number of conflict cases. Since this landscape was overlooked, the issues were also overlooked. We felt that as a civic body our responsibility was much higher than just complementing efforts in landscapes where there were already enough or more initiatives," he says.

In the last two decades the number of elephants in Bannerghatta has almost doubled as per census figures. A Rocha India uses research as an important tool to guide its efforts and understand the issues more holistically.

A Rocha is currently doing the Elephant Corridor Project in collaboration with the Wildlife Trust of India.

Human-elephant conflict is a site-specific problem driven by larger causal factors and measuring it just by number of deaths doesn't give a holistic perspective, points out Dr. Krishnan.

According to him, in Bannerghatta and Hosur factors like the fragmented nature of the region, the huge human population, ineffective land use management, increased change in land cover due cultivation and development, and growing expansion aspirations of the local population are all compounding factors that heavily influence the conflicts. More interestingly, elephants also learn to adapt.

Considering everything, the question is how to keep the conflicts at manageable levels such that people are not displaced or ripped off their livelihoods. The team started off by researching the complex layers of the issue and working with communities.

The first attempted solution was a social barrier which involved fencing private farms using chilli-tobacco fences and asking farmers to take responsibility for protecting the farms. "More than success that brought in a lot of community will and participation," Dr. Krishnan remembers.

The team then started surveying the existing boundary barrier system along the 285-km perimeter of the park and worked with the authorities to see if the allocated state resources for mitigating conflict could be put to use in the right way. This brought to the surface a lot of intricate information including encroachment of forest land, compensation demand for crop loss on encroached land and so on.

The next step was site-specific intervention.

"We looked at the feasibility and limitations of types of barriers in different locations. We also realised conflict is not uniform across this landscape. For example, there are areas of low conflict where community tolerance is high. So, in such areas, we tried to offset the dependency of people on agriculture and started programmes like soft skill training and other strategically devised projects and activities, coupled with a lot of sensitisation and community building."

While all of this was being carried out, it was also observed that the elephants were also adapting extremely fast.

"We'd come up with a solution and by one season elephants would learn to overcome it."

To catch up the team turned to technology. Early warning systems, infrared signals, seismic signals, router system, bio acoustics and so on were experimented with.

"We also started understanding which elephants operate in which area. We have enough data to establish personalities in elephants. We knew certain elephants would not break solar fences, but certain others would. We started gathering that level of depth of knowledge, and then we started intervening," Dr. Krishnan notes.

A Rocha is currently doing the Elephant Corridor Project in collaboration with the Wildlife Trust of India.

One of the three elephant corridors in Bannerghatta is blocked due to private land between two forests, and this forces the elephants to go around increasing their exposure to the villagers. The project looks at solutions for possible conflict.

Dr. Krishnan says, "We are trying to intervene at smaller levels and trying to stitch that larger vision that is mitigating human elephant conflicts."

Avoiding a jumbo problem through early warning systems

Mysuru-based Nature Conservation Foundation has been working on mitigating human-elephant conflicts in Hassan and Valparai

Shilpa Elizabeth
BENGALURU

Valparai in Tamil Nadu is part of the Anamalai hills which literally translates to 'elephant hills.' Anamalai has the second-largest population of elephants in India. Data shows that between 1994 and July 2023, 48 people lost their lives in elephant attacks in this region which has 120-odd elephants and a human population of approximately 70,000.

Mysuru-based Nature Conservation Foundation started its efforts to mitigate human-elephant conflicts in Valparai when plantation owners from the area reached out to them in 2002.

When M. Ananda Kumar, senior scientist at NCF, and his team started studying the problem they noticed that there were rainforest fragments embedded within the tea plantations. Elephants that came from the surrounding protected areas would move through the plantations to get to these rainforest fragments.

A colony damaged in elephant attack. GANESH RAGHUNATHAN

The team identified herds and individual elephants and also noticed that their movement patterns were consistent. Crops weren't damaged, but buildings like ration shops, noon-meal centres and residential places that stored food grains were.

"We looked at patterns. Most of the deaths happened on the roads between December to February. People aged between 40-60 years were most vulnerable. This gave us an idea of when and where to concentrate our efforts," Mr. Kumar says.

Most cases of conflict were surprise encounters; People were unaware of elephants nearby and ran into them. This meant that if some kind of early warning system could be in place, many such incidents could be avoided.

Initially, warnings were sent out as tickers on the Valparai television channel, a local cable network subscribed to by around 25,000 people in the region then. Later the messaging was shifted to mobile phones.

In 2015 the team partnered with an automation company to develop a custom-designed lights system for warning. Operated using mobile phones, it is managed mostly by the locals today. All the deployed lights, when turned on, are visible from the bus stop in the nearest Valparai town.

"We also conduct awareness sessions and prepare people before the season starts. We communicate about precautions through street plays, and even bring TV artists from Chennai whom people look upto. All these measures are implemented in collaboration with the Tamil Nadu Forest department."

The efforts have seen results. If the average number of people losing their lives in conflicts used to be three earlier, it has come down to one in the last 20 years. There have been no reports of deaths or injuries resulting from human-elephant conflicts in the past 2.5 years in the region.

Efforts in Hassan

In 2015, the team started looking for solutions to mitigate conflicts in Hassan where coffee plantations are in abundance. According to the data from the Karnataka Forest Department, human-elephant conflicts resulted in the death of 20 people from the district in the last five years.

Between 2013 and 2015, 22 jumbos were captured and translocated. But the issue persisted. Data analysis by NCF between 2015 and 2019 showed that for every capture of an elephant, two to three new individuals appeared within 50 days from the date of capture.

The pattern of incidents was almost similar to that in Valparai. Most deaths happened on the roads between 6 to 10 am and 4 to 8 pm, when people went to or returned from work. Victims were mostly men aged between 40 and 60 years.

After interactions with the villagers and departments concerned, the team replicated their systems from Valparai in Hassan too with the help of Karnataka Forest Department. Around 7,000 people in Hassan have subscribed to the SMS alert system till date.

The number of deaths started showing a decline between 2018 and 2020. But unexpectedly things took a turn for the worse and 12 people died in conflicts between 2021 and 2022.

The reason? NCF research points to changes in land use.

Plantation owners have been fencing off their lands, and elephants, which used to take cover in these plantations while walking, couldn't enter them anymore.

This not only forced them to take the road, but they also started moving into the neighbouring Belur range of Sakleshpur where people didn't have much experience in dealing with elephants, says Dr. Kumar.

NCF stepped up on its early warning systems. On top of SMS warnings and lights, the team, with the help of the forest department, installed digital information boards at junctions displaying information on elephant locations.

"For the last nine months, there have been no incidents, touchwood. But it is still challenging and achieving targets will take time," Dr. Kumar says.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 16, 1973

No Carrying of Nightsoil: Practice Ends

Bangalore, Aug. 15: The practice of carrying of night soil on head by scavengers came to an end in the State to-day.

The State Government had by an order banned the manual transportation of nightsoil from to-day as part of the programme to mark the Silver Jubilee of Indian Independence.

According to official sources the Government order had taken effect in almost all the municipalities barring a few where the order has been challenged in courts of law and stay orders have been issued. The State Government had taken initiated steps six months ago for ending the scavenging of open type latrines and through a series of directives to the municipalities has asked the latter to issue notices to house owners to convert open type latrines into flush type ones.

Urs Commends Consumer Resistance

Bangalore, Aug. 15: The Mysore Chief Minister Mr. D. Devaraj Urs, has commended the consumer resistance movement as a big step in combating the phenomenon of rising prices of essential commodities. He asked the people to try self imposed restraints on consumption.

The Chief Minister, who was broadcasting from the Bangalore Station of AIR to mark the Independence Day celebrations, however, declared that there was no question of the Government absolving itself of the responsibility for tackling the problem of rising prices.

Rural tubers grace urban dining tables

Nestled within the buffer zone of the Dandeli-Anshi Tiger Reserve and the Karwar Territorial Forest Division, the Kunbi community hopes to find a new market for their climate-resilient tubers

Swathi Nair

In the lush forests of Kali river valley in North Karnataka, the Kunbi community has been cultivating tubers in Joida taluk for generations, with approximately 300 households growing about 40 varieties. The climate-resilient crop has been a staple food for several forest-dependent communities and is largely grown and sold by women. For the women, tuber cultivation is not just a livelihood, but a way of life deeply rooted in their culture and heritage.

Namrata Derekar, a farmer from the Kunbi community, explained how her family has been growing tubers for as long as she can remember. "My grandmother and great-grandmother used to grow tubers, and it has been passed down for generations. It's not just a crop for us; it's a part of our identity," she said.

Nestled within the buffer zone of the Dandeli-Anshi Tiger Reserve and the Karwar Territorial Forest Division, the community cultivates a wide range of tubers, including indigenous varieties such as *Kunbi mudli* and *kone*. Their dedication to preserving the biodiversity of tubers has earned them recognition in the past, including the prestigious Plant Genome Saviour Community Awards given by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

"Centuries ago, our ancestors migrated here from Goa to escape religious and cultural persecution by the Portuguese and settled in the Western Ghats of Karnataka," said Jayanand Derekar, a member of the Kunbi community. "Farming was all they knew and tubers have been our staple food for generations."

P Sethuraman Sivakumar, principal scientist, ICAR - Central Tuber Crops Research Institute, Thiruvananthapuram, says that when his team was surveying the farmers in Joida about five years ago, they learnt that the crop was

When chefs and farmers join forces, it can change the way one thinks about food, influencing what we eat and buy

able to survive extreme environments and give yield in an off-season too. "Almost every other Kunbi tribe household grows tubers because they also hold strong cultural roots with the crop; we even saw instances of them worshipping the taro during festivals," he said.

Despite climate change affecting other crops in the area, tubers have proven to be resilient. However, the lack of demand for tubers has presented a significant challenge for the community. People in the city find it difficult to peel, cook and consume tubers and are unaware of the cooking techniques and recipes associated with them.

Tried and tested Kunbi women cooking tubers in their kitchen in Joida, Karnataka; a variety of tuber dishes. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"Farming alone doesn't generate enough income for me, so I have another job as an *anganwadi* teacher," shared Namrata.

Despite showcasing tubers and dishes made using them at the annual mela in Kumbharwada village, a sustainable income for the community remains elusive. Home chef Reshma Kamat recognises the need for a more permanent solution, saying, "We need something that can generate income all year around."

But there is hope. Jayanand, a farmer and entrepreneur, established Kali Farmer Producer Company to help the farmers in Joida find a market for tuber crops. Together with Spudnik Farms – a collective of small holding organic farmers located around Bengaluru, Chikkaballapur and Joida – they hope to create value-added products, such as *sandige* or sun-dried wafers and other chips made of tubers, to increase income year-round.

To boost demand, a chef residency programme was held in Joida for five renowned city chefs this year. Chefs Nayantara Menon Bagla, Anumitra Ghosh Dastidar, Shreya Gazmer, Karan Upmanyu, and Karan Thakker, dove headfirst into the world of farming practices and recipes from Joida's home cooks, learning as much as they could during the two-day residency.

The result was a feast for the senses – a traditional *yelle oota* (banana leaf meal) that showcased native tuber dishes prepared by the chefs and home cooks of Joida, hosted at The Courtyard in the city.

"The main issue here is unfamiliarity. With chef residencies and hosting a meal for Bengalureans, we hope to serve tubers in a way that is familiar to them, bridging the gap of unfamiliarity," said Sumeet Kaur, founder and CEO, Spudnik Farms.

When chefs and farmers join forces, it can actually change the way one thinks about food, influencing what we eat and how we buy ingredients.

According to chef Nayantara Menon Bagla, who is also a nutritionist, it is crucial for chefs to endorse a circular economy by learning about ingredients that are organically produced and have lower environmental impacts, especially on climate and biodiversity.

Chef Anumitra, who has been serving tubers in her restaurant, Edible Archives, in Goa for three years now, believes that while they may not be popular in urban areas, they are widely enjoyed in Goa, Kerala and North Karnataka.

She believes chefs have a responsibility to popularise indigenous ingredients and contribute to a more sustainable food system. "What we eat now will determine what will be grown and that will determine what the planet will look like in 10 years," she adds.

Among tuber crops, cassava and sweet potato are the most climate-resilient ones. Sweet potato, another tuber crop grown in Joida, is even recognised internationally as a "saviour crop" as it provides a reliable income for farmers facing food and income loss due to erratic weather changes. During his research, Sethuraman found that when the super cyclone hit Puri district, in Odisha in 1999, and all the other crops were washed out, the tubers were able to survive and provided a source of sustenance for the affected communities.

As we face a future of uncertain weather patterns and food insecurity, it is communities such as the Kunbi hold the key to our survival.

Bengali theatre festival is back

SmaranniK Theatre Festival 2023, organised by SmaranniK – a Bengali theatre group from Bengaluru, is a one-day theatre festival. This will be the theatre group's 10th edition of this festival organised by Debsankar Halder and Swagata Mukherjee in memory of Soumitra Chattopadhyay.

The one-day event will feature four Bengali plays – *Sayam-er Aalo* (staged by SmaranniK) and *Ekhono Ondhokar,* followed by *Pagol-Para* and *Typist*.

Festival and artistic director of SmaranniK, Sayandeb Bhattacharya, says, "Our aim has been to organise an annual theatre festival. The group was founded by 11 of us, including myself, who have been passionate about theatre. This festival will feature two short plays, staged by our group and two full length plays, with theatre groups from Kolkata. Till date we have staged 38 plays."

Sayam er aalo, directed by Sayandeb, is about human connection and redemption, where the profound depths of human relations are explored. *Ekhono Ondhokar* will feature well-known theatre and television actor Swagata Mukherjee. This play is about two characters named Ajaan and Prarthana who start off together nurturing dreams, but fall apart as their dreams fade away.

Pagol Para is an intense play based on stories of Bibhutibhusan Bandyapadhyay and acted out by Sangeet Natak Academy awardee Debsankar Halder, explains Sayandeb. *Typist*, he says, is an adaptation by the legendary actor, Padma Bhusan, Soumitra Chatterjee and features Debsankar Halder too.

The festival, which will be held on August 19, commences at 3pm. The venue is the MLR Convention Centre (1st Floor), JP Nagar (near Brigade Millenium). Tickets for ₹750, ₹500, ₹300, are on BookMyshow. Call 9741408132 for details.

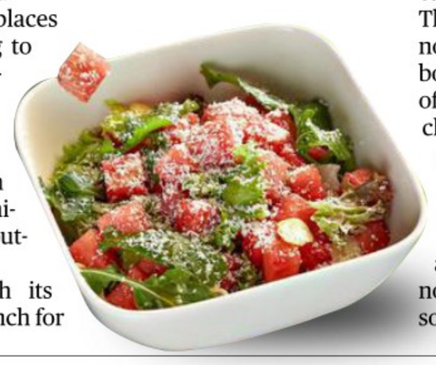
EATING OUT

Of cakes, bakes, coffee and more

Ruth Dhanaraj

Here's a bit of good news for those who've enjoyed the warmth of Concu in Hyderabad – they are now in Bengaluru! After a decade of being in the business of dishing out delectables, a debut in Bengaluru is a milestone for the patisserie and cafe chain.

While most places sport the 'cafe' tag to add to their nomenclature, Concu's ambience provides ample sunlight and space, coupled with a spartan chic reminiscent of actual outdoor cafes.



In keeping with its name (concu is French for crafted), Concu's menu has been curated to accommodate pretty much any level of peckishness – from a range of eggs and toast for breakfast or heavier wraps for brunch, to pizzas, pastas and rice bowls for lunch and dinner.

The brioche toasts are a great choice if you are debating how hungry you really are or even if you can't make up your mind. There's a vegetarian and a non-vegetarian option, both served with a garnish of argula and cream cheese, and both are scrumptious. The edamame and fava beans are perfectly cooked with just the right amount of firmness and none of the mushiness associated with overcooked legumes. The gongura mutton on toast is a welcome change, especially as the meat is flavourful and tender, coming apart easily for bite-sized portions.

Concu
Hits: Edamame and fava beans toast, Gongura mutton toast
Misses: Medovik (honey cake)
Wallet factor: ₹1200 for two
Address: Concu, 1089/A, 12th Main Rd, Doopanahalli, Indiranagar

Concu caters to tea and coffee drinkers impartially with a separate beverage menu which makes room for milkshakes, smoothies and lemonades (yes, more than one!). The salted caramel cappuccino was a happy surprise as was the refreshing lemon, ginger and mint lemonade. Both drinks paired well with the brioche toasts.

The stroganoff was quite enjoyable with juicy portions of chicken and mushroom both, and the garlic butter rice was evenly flavoured and not too greasy.

The menu in itself has been thoughtfully designed with brightly coloured little icons indicating the base of any dish; a choice of almond or millet milk options for your drink is also available.

Perhaps what will make Concu a hit with families and the sweet of tooth is the fascinating array of pastries one can indulge in for dessert or even as a standalone meal (hey, no judgement here!).

The Banoffee is a good idea if you feel too full and have just a little bit of space for something sugary. The winning combination of caramel crumble, banana ganache and whipped mascarpone cream topped with sliced bananas sits lightly after a heavy meal.

The Medovik is Concu's version of the traditional Slavić honey cake consisting of biscuit cake layered with honey, caramel and cream cheese. It is rather sedate in looks and taste, and a far cry from the honey cakes seen at the bakery round the corner.

And there certainly is no dearth of chocolate in all its glorious forms here.

With all that it has going for it, Concu could very well be on your list of solo hangouts in the city.

CITYBEATS

Dance moves

AUGUST 18 7.30PM ONWARDS
Motley Dance Company will be conducting a shuffle dance class. It is said to be a form of dance that is characterised by quick and slick footwork. They will also have a Bollywood (open style choreography dance workshop) later in the evening.
At Lahe Lahe, Indiranagar. Tickets on Townscript.

Music to create awareness

AUGUST 19, 4.30PM AND 7.30PM
BSM and RISHI Foundation present *The Circle of Life Concert Series 2023,* to create an awareness of the philanthropic activities of RISHI Foundation in working with HIV AIDS affected children and safeguarding the environment.
At Bangalore International Centre. Donor passes on https://rishifoundation.in/circle-of-life-concert-2023

A biriyani meal

ONGOING
Dig into MLA Potlam Biryani, which is known for its fusion of flavours. Their biryani comes accompanied by mirchi ka salan and burani raita. It is priced at ₹449 per plate.
On at Cloud Kitchen-Lets Biryani Koramangala. Also available on Zomato and Swiggy.

Founding ideals of secularism, unity under threat: Kerala CM

Pinarayi urges caution against 'efforts being made to impede liberty' of various sections; sets the target of converting State into developed middle-income society by 100th year of Independence

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Urging caution against alleged efforts being made to impede the liberty of various sections, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has said the country's independence hinges on thwarting the growing threats to its founding ideals of unity, democracy, secularism, and scientific thought.

Leading the State's 77th Independence Day celebrations here on Tuesday, he also laid stress on the State's commitment to building an egalitarian and modern society.

Freedom fete: Pinarayi Vijayan inspecting the guard of honour at the celebrations in Thiruvananthapuram. S. MAHINSHA

Mr. Vijayan, who hoisted the national flag and received salute at the ceremonial parade at the Central Stadium here, harked back to the country's freedom movement that drew energy from the participation of all sections of the population. "People cutting across caste, religions, regions, languages, cultures and beliefs are entitled to the hard-earned freedom which could not be restricted within particular groups," he said.

Setting an ambitious target of transforming Kerala into a developed middle-income society that is driven by knowledge and innovation by the 100th year of Independence, he said the government strived to ensure equitable access to benefits for all sections.

The ceremonial parade also witnessed the participation of a Tamil Nadu Police contingent.

Antimicrobial Resistance has become a silent pandemic, says expert

V. Geetanath
HYDERABAD

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) to existing antibiotics has already reached a silent 'pandemic' stage. Sewage sample surveillance being carried out in some of the major cities has been giving sufficient indication of the same, according to director of Tata Institute for Genetics and Society (TIGS) Rakesh Mishra.

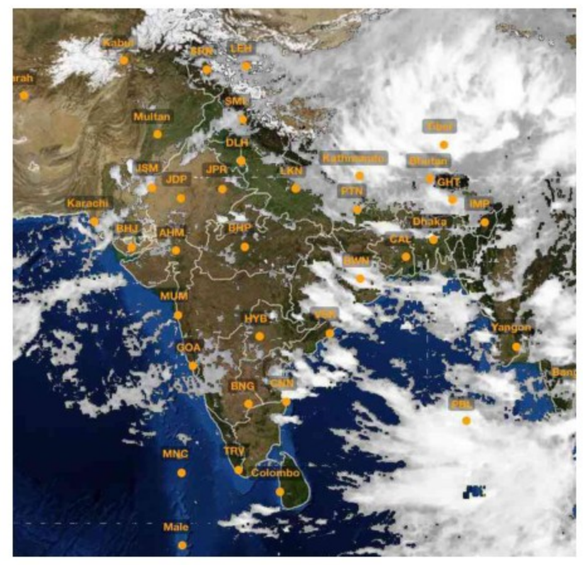
"We are seeing a trend in the sewage samples. AMR can be identified very accurately even when there is under-reporting at the clinical level as everyone uses the toilet and bugs will reach the sewage system in some form or the other," pointed out Dr. Mishra, who is also the former director of CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB).

The CCMB and its sister organisation CSIR-IICT have been carrying out sewage studies quite successfully from the COVID-19 pandemic time by collecting and analysing samples from open drains and, when permitted, from the Sewerage Treatment Plants (STPs) of the Twin Cities.

"We can easily make out that there is a large presence of AMR in our environment. Through gene profiling, we can check what antibiotics are not going to work and where we can reduce unnecessary usage," explained the top scientist.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Wednesday: Light/moderate scattered to fairly widespread rainfall/thunderstorm & lightning with isolated heavy rainfall likely over Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Andaman and Nicobar, Odisha and Assam.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	0.6	32.6	27.2	Kozhikode	—	33.2	24.8
Ahmedabad	—	34.3	26.0	Kurnool	—	34.4	25.6
Aizawl	—	31.6	22.3		0.3	36.4	26.2
Allahabad	—	34.5	27.6		0.6	36.7	24.5
Bengaluru	—	31.0	21.0	Mangaluru	—	30.4	23.2
Bhopal	9.0	29.4	22.8	Mumbai	1.0	31.0	25.4
Bhubaneswar	—	34.6	25.3	Mysuru	—	30.3	23.4
Chandigarh	13.4	32.2	26.4	New Delhi	—	34.8	26.0
Chennai	5.0	35.4	25.0	Patna	14.0	34.9	28.0
Coimbatore	—	33.8	22.6	Port Blair	21.0	28.0	24.7
Dehradun	5.0	28.6	23.8	Puducherry	—	33.6	26.8
Gangtok	5.0	23.2	18.7	Pune	—	28.5	22.9
Goa	—	31.6	24.9	Raipur	11.2	33.6	24.2
Guwahati	—	35.4	25.4	Ranchi	18.0	30.4	24.0
Hubballi	—	29.0	22.0	Shillong	58.0	23.4	17.2
Hyderabad	1.0	31.8	23.6	Shimla	62	22.2	14.4
Imphal	2.0	31.7	22.5	Srinagar	5.0	32.3	16.0
Jaipur	—	34.8	26.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	30.8	24.6
Kochi	—	30.8	25.4	Tiruchi	10	36.7	23.6
Kohima	4.0	21.7	18.5	Vijayawada	—	36.0	27.6
Kolkata	—	33.0	28.5	Visakhapatnam	21.0	34.6	27.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.41	..43	.47	61	...112	.....
Bengaluru	...7	..23	.72	66	96	.....
Chennai	...5	..38	117	59	54	.....
Delhi	...5	...3	.82	87	...165	.....
Hyderabad	...5	..32	.12	52	92	.....
Kolkata	...7	..21	.23	68	84	.....
Lucknow	.22	..10	.15	58	44	.....
Mumbai	.12	7	113	 19	30	.....
Pune	133	219	109	59	52	.....
Visakhapatnam	.41	..—	..—	.....—	.....—	.....

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Bettiah, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 286 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Sivasagar, Assam recorded a healthy AQI score of 20

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Jagan stresses welfare of SCs, STs, BCs in speech

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said priority is being given to the welfare of STs, SCs, BCs and minorities. He said 50% of the posts in various boards and committees have been allotted the persons belonging to these categories.

He hoisted the national flag during in the Independence Day celebrations organised at Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation Stadium on Tuesday. He inspected the Guard of Honour and presented medals to the meritorious police personnel.

"Of the five Deputy Chief Ministers, four posts have been given to the people belonging to ST, SC, BC and minority categories," he said in his Independence Day speech.

Direct Benefit Transfer

In the last four years, ₹2.31 lakh crore had been credited to the accounts of the beneficiaries of various welfare schemes under the Direct Benefit Transfer scheme and 76% of the beneficiaries belonged to SCs, STs, BCs and minorities, Mr. Reddy said.

About 2.06 lakh permanent posts have been filled in various departments and 80% of these posts were filled with SCs, STs and other weaker sections of the society, he said.

A 125-foot-high bronze statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar will be unveiled at Swarajya Maidan on Constitution Day, he said.

BRS made Telangana model State for country, says KCR

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao on Tuesday asserted that transparent policies of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi government have ensured that the State becomes a model for the country. He was addressing a gathering after unfurling the national flag on the Golconda Fort premises in Hyderabad.

Mr. Rao said the well-intentioned approach of the government in the creation of wealth and its distribution among the people ensured that poverty was significantly reduced in the last nine years. He recalled the relentless efforts of his government in ensuring all-round progress.

Tryst with tricolour: School children holding national flags at a rally in Hyderabad on Tuesday. NAGARA GOPAL

College staff face action over lapses in admission

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The University of Kerala has initiated disciplinary action against top officials of the MSM College, Kayamkulam, for their alleged lapse in preventing the M.Com. admission of a former Students' Federation of India (SFI) on the basis of fake degree certificates.

It decided to serve show-cause notices on the college Principal, Vice-Principal, and the head of the Commerce department in connection with the now-cancelled admission of Nikhil Thomas who was held for submitting fake certificates.

Caged protest

Rights of animals: An activist staging a hunger strike against discrimination of animals, in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday. S. MAHINSHA

Stalin seeks transfer of education back to State List

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Tuesday called for transferring education back to the State List of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. He said that only this would help to abolish the centralised examinations like NEET. Education, originally a State subject, was moved to the Concurrent List by the Indira Gandhi government during the Emergency.

Hoisting the national flag at Fort St. George on Independence Day, Mr. Stalin recalled the stand taken by former Chief Ministers C.N. Annadurai and M. Karunanidhi on State autonomy. "All subjects that interact with people directly should be transferred to the State List. Especially, education should be transferred [back] to the State List," he said. The T.N. government would constitute a welfare board for workers attached to service-providers, such as Ola, Uber, Swiggy, and Zomato, who have been serving their consumers in major cities, Mr. Stalin said.

The Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme would be expanded to all State-run schools across Tamil Nadu from August 25 and he would visit a school at Thirukkuvalai for inaugurating the scheme that day, he said. Mr. Stalin said the scheme to provide a subsidy of ₹1 lakh to women autorickshaw drivers would be expanded to cover 500 women. The monthly pension for freedom fighters and their families would be increased from ₹10,000 to ₹11,000, he said. He also announced that the Agricultural College and Research Institute, functioning under Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, at Killikulam in Thoothukudi district would be named after late freedom fighter V.O. Chidambaranar.

He said the government would implement a programme to train 10,000 ex-servicemen to help them get jobs. About 55,000 vacancies in government departments would be filled this financial year. The Kalaignar Centenary Park would be established on a 6.09-acre plot on Cathedral Road in Chennai at a cost of ₹25 crore.

BMTC honours thoughtful bus crew for quenching thirst of passengers

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

Following a post about a bus crew's thoughtful act of keeping a water can on board to satisfy the thirst of passengers, the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) showed its appreciation by honouring the crew.

On June 1, *The Hindu* had shared a post on X (formerly Twitter) about a bus plying on the Kempe Gowda Bus Station to Nisarga Badavane route. The crew had placed a water container next to the driver's seat, along with a glass, for the benefit of passengers.

The post went viral, garnering appreciation from online users who urged the BMTC to reward the crew's commendable initiative.

A total of 12 staff members, who had garnered praise from passengers for their commuter-friendly attitude, were honoured by Sathyavathi G., Managing Director of BMTC, in Bengaluru on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

In response, the BMTC reached out to this reporter, and traced the bus and the crew members who had taken the initiative.

The BMTC stated: "In the vehicle with registration number KA57 F1192, operating on route No. 372F/1, the crew kept a water can every day in the vehicle for the convenience of passengers."

On August 14, Sathyavathi G., Managing Director of BMTC, along with senior officials felicitated the crew – driver Srishaila Bhimappa Mandageri and conductor Parushuram Rathore – of the bus belonging to depot number 27. Parushuram Rathore said, "We never anticipated that our initiative would gain recognition. Our decision to place a water can and glass in the bus was primarily driven by the scorching summer, foreseeing the thirst of numerous passengers. Receiving this acknowledgement brings me great joy."

A total of 12 staff members, who had garnered praise from passengers for their commuter-friendly attitude, were honoured by Ms. Sathyavathi, who presented them with cash rewards and letters of appreciation, at the BMTC head office in Shantinagar.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Ms. Sathyavathi said, "Keeping a water can in the bus is a wonderful initiative by our crew. This is possible only when our crew have a sense of ownership and loyalty. We identify and recognise them at the central office level to motivate and inspire others too to emulate such good deeds."

Kerala likely to face drought due to deficit monsoon

Dhinesh Kallungal
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala is now possibly staring at a drought-like condition with the monsoon deficit widening. The southwest monsoon has been abysmal with overall rainfall between June and August (up to August 14) 44% deficient and the threat of drought looming large in many parts of the State. Deviating from the usual pattern of 240.2 mm rainfall in the first two weeks of August, the State has received only 25.0 mm, registering a shortfall of 90% rain in August.

Though the India Meteorological Department (IMD) had predicted an above-normal southwest monsoon in the State ahead of the four-month-long monsoon season, the picture is not at all rosy but alarming, considering precarious water levels in reservoirs. As of August 14, the water availability in key reservoirs under the Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) stands at a mere 37% of the total storage capacity. The reservoirs have a total power generational capability of 1,537.032 million units (mu) as of Monday, whereas it was 3,438.062 mu during the corresponding period in 2022. The latest meteorological features do not support the strengthening of the monsoon during the remaining period in August. An extended rain forecast issued by the IMD warns of below-normal rainfall till August 25.

Normally, the State used to get only 13% of its seasonal average rainfall of 2,018.7 mm in September. This means even normal rainfall in September is insufficient to make up for the rain deficit and only extreme rainfall events can compensate for the shortfall, which is unlikely as per the current meteorological conditions, said a senior IMD scientist.

According to the Bureau of Meteorology, Australia, sea surface temperatures (SSTs) in the tropical Pacific are exceeding El Niño thresholds, with climate models indicating this is likely to continue.

From the ramparts

Narendra Modi's speech was more self-congratulatory than reflective

Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered what he described as an account of his two consecutive terms in office, delivering his 10th customary address to the nation on Independence Day. His last address on August 15 before the general election next year also turned out to be a campaign speech in effect, as he expressed confidence of winning a third term. Cataloguing the achievements and initiatives of the country since 2014 – the year he became the Prime Minister – Mr. Modi suggested that it was a new beginning for the country which was until then unstable and aimless even though Independence from British imperialism was won in 1947. Mr. Modi cited demography, democracy and diversity as the three core strengths of the country, before lauding young entrepreneurs, farmers, and sportspeople who overcome the odds. He cited three challenges that hold back the progress of India – corruption, dynastic politics and appeasement politics. Since 2014, Mr. Modi told fellow citizens – whom he addressed as 'family members' throughout the speech – he has been tackling these challenges head on and making many enemies but remains undeterred. According to him, India was overcoming the ills of "1000 years of slavery" of the past, and is now laying the foundation for a "1000 year golden era". In an emerging new world order, India would be playing a central role, Mr. Modi said.

The Prime Minister's speech was inspiring and optimistic at one level. But it was also more self-congratulatory and exclusive than self-reflective and unifying, though Mr. Modi said India's unity across regions, communities and gender was the utmost priority for him. The unity pitch did not resonate well, as the principal Opposition party, the Congress, said Mr. Modi's speech was full of "distortions, lies, exaggerations and vague promises". The Prime Minister deployed his skilful oratory to conflate his own persona with the country. The continuity in India's progress since 1947 is as self-evident as the daunting challenges of its present. Denying or overlooking either is not a great strategy for progress. Mr. Modi noted that peace and normalcy were returning to strife-torn Manipur, but no State accountability for the violence and chaos was mentioned. Mr. Modi's claims of an uncompromising crusade against corruption are weakened by the selective approach of the central investigative agencies that target only Opposition politicians until the point that they align with the Bharatiya Janata Party. Overall, Mr. Modi reinforced the faith of his faithful and the scepticism of his sceptics.

A surge foretold

Inflation could undermine broader consumption and economic growth

The latest NSO data, showing retail inflation accelerating to a 15-month high, comes less than a week after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) left interest rates unchanged even as it warned of "a substantial increase in headline inflation" in the near term. The primary driver of this surge was the food price component, with the Consumer Food Price Index-based inflation accelerating by a mind-numbing 696 basis points to 11.51%, from June's 4.55%. Save oils and fats, the 11 other items on the 12-member food and beverages group of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) logged year-on-year increases in prices. Cereals, the largest food component with an almost 10% weight in the CPI and representing the basic staples of rice and wheat, saw prices surge 13% from July 2022 levels, and posted a near doubling in the month-on-month pace to 1.2%. It was, however, vegetables, with a 6% contribution to the CPI, that witnessed a vertigo-inducing ascent in the inflation rate, with prices increasing 37.3% year-on-year, and 38.1% month-on-month in July. Data compiled by CMIE show the sequential surge in vegetable prices was the highest in at least five years, as tomato prices skyrocketed 214% from June's levels. The all-India average retail price of the nutrient-rich food as on August 15, while 9% softer than a month earlier, was still at a punishingly elevated ₹107.87 a kilogram, well over three times last year's Independence Day price of ₹31.66, data from the Consumer Affairs Department show.

Rather disconcertingly, the prices of 18 of the 19 items in the vegetables sub-group registered appreciable sequential price gains, with onions (19%), potato (11%), cauliflower (32%), brinjal (24%), ginger and garlic (almost 21% each) and potassium-rich green chillies (46%) making it very difficult for any family to manage its monthly food budget. Inflation in non-food items too were a palpable concern. The five other broad groups on the CPI, all recorded sequential price increases, signalling inflation is now more widely spread across the goods and services consumed in the economy than even in the preceding month. For all the central bank's optimism that the price shock is likely to be temporary, allowing monetary policymakers the latitude to look through a couple of high headline inflation readings, the risk of inflation expectations getting unmoored in the face of such runaway price gains is far too real and in the present. With a looming El Niño and uneven monsoon rains adding to the uncertainty over the supply of agricultural produce in the coming months, the RBI may find itself facing an uphill task in aligning inflation to its avowed target of 4% unless all authorities act in concert to tame inflation before it undermines broader consumption and economic growth.

Consumption-based poverty estimates have relevance

C. Rangarajan

was Chairman, Expert Group to Review the Methodology for Measuring Poverty (2014)

S. Mahendra Dev

was Member, Expert Group to Review the Methodology for Measuring Poverty (2014)

Multi-dimensional poverty estimates are not substitutes for National Sample Survey consumption-based poverty ratios

A recent report by NITI Aayog on multidimensional poverty shows that the percentage of the poor has gone down from 25% in 2015-16 to 15% in 2019-21 and around 135 million people were lifted out of poverty during this period. The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index report of 2023 of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI), which was released recently, also shows that the incidence of the multidimensional poverty index declined from 27.5% in 2015-16 to 16.2% in 2019-21.

In this context, we briefly examine the issues, particularly on methodology relating to the multidimensional poverty index, and argue that consumption-based poverty estimates are still very relevant. Multidimensional poverty estimates are not substitutes for National Sample Survey (NSS) consumption-based poverty ratios. In the end, we also flag some concerns about consumption expenditure surveys and the need to correct them.

Comparison of results

The report of the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2018 says: "India has made momentous progress in reducing multidimensional poverty. The incidence of multidimensional poverty was almost halved between 2005/06 and 2015/16, climbing down to 27.5 per cent. Thus, within ten years, the number of poor people in India fell by more than 271 million – a truly massive gain". This is high praise indeed.

Is the conclusion of global MPI a new revelation? No, as far as the 2015-16 estimates are concerned. The estimates of poverty based on consumer expenditure and using the Tendulkar committee methodology show (over a seven-year period between 2004-05 and 2011-12) that the number of poor came down by 137 million despite an increase in population. According to the Rangarajan Committee methodology, the decline between 2009-10 and 2011-12 is 92 million, which is 46 million per annum. For a decade, it will be larger than that of global MPI. However, in absolute terms, the poverty ratios based on the Tendulkar and Rangarajan Committee methodologies are lower than as estimated by global MPI.

The search for non-income dimensions of poverty possibly stems from a view that in terms of the capabilities approach to the concept and measurement of poverty, some of these 'capabilities' may not be tightly linked to the privately purchased consumption basket in terms of which the poverty lines are currently drawn. Therefore, poverty based on income or consumption is different from deprivations based on education or health.

As pointed out by the Expert Group to Review the Methodology for Measuring Poverty (2014), there are reservations on using multiple indicators as these multidimensional indicators/measures raise several issues regarding their measurability, aggregation across indicators, and, crucially, of databases that provide the requisite information at reasonably short intervals. These need to be considered and evaluated carefully. For example, there is a problem with the child mortality indicator as it is for population groups and not for households.

Aggregation is another problem. In principle, they should be independent. Access to safe drinking water, for example, cannot be aggregated with indicators such as child mortality. Even in respect of independent indicators, analytically appropriate rules of aggregation require that all of them relate to the same household. More generally, this requirement poses several data constraints.

It may be noted that we are not against multidimensional poverty or deprivations. One can analyse the progress of non-income indicators such as education, health, sanitation, drinking water, and child mortality over time with income or consumption poverty. But, converting all of them into an index poses several problems. Deaton and Drèze (2014) also indicate that "it is important to supplement expenditure-based poverty estimates with other indicators of living standards, relating for instance to nutrition, health, education and the quality of the environment".

On multidimensional issues, Srinivasan (2007) says viewing public services as another dimension besides consumption in a multidimensional conceptualisation of poverty is more fruitful. However, he is critical of multidimensional indices. He says that "collapsing many relevant but not necessarily commensurate dimensions into a single index defined as an arbitrarily weighted sum of disparate indexes makes little sense. The Human Development Index pioneered by the United Nations Development Programme is an example of an arbitrarily weighted sum of non-commensurate indexes. It certainly is not a multidimensional conceptualisation in any meaningful sense but simply yet another arbitrary unidimensional index".

In the minds of most people, being rich or poor is associated with levels of income. The various non-income indicators of poverty are in fact reflections of inadequate income. Defining poverty in terms of income or in the absence of such data in terms of expenditure seems most appropriate, and it is this method which is followed in most countries.

We do not have official data on consumer expenditure after 2011-12 to make a comparison with trends in the multidimensional poverty index. The survey data on consumption expenditures done in 2017-18 have not been released officially. In the absence of such data, there have been several studies on poverty using indirect methods and using Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) and Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data sources – and they have come up with differing conclusions.

Need for changes in surveys

The consumption expenditure survey is being conducted in the current year. For purposes of comparison, we need to follow one method. Therefore, it is best to wait for the survey results to be published. Earlier surveys clearly indicate that the poverty ratio comes down strongly during a period of high growth. If you look at recent years including the COVID-19 period, the growth rate has come down. There is ground to believe that the rate of reduction in the poverty ratio must have slowed down. This is at best a guess. We need to wait for consumption expenditure survey data.

An important issue is the differences in aggregate consumption estimates between National Accounts Statistics (NAS) and NSS data. These two estimates of consumption (NSS and NAS) do not match in any country; India is no exception. What is perplexing is that the difference in India between the NSS and the NAS consumption is widening over time. From a difference of less than 10% in the late 1970s, it has come to 53.1% in 2011-12, i.e., the Survey Estimate is only 46.9% of NAS estimates. The difference is too big to be brushed aside. The National Statistical Office must study the problem and come out with possible suggestions to improve the collection of data through both routes.

In addition, there is a need to supplement the results of consumption surveys with a study of the impact of public expenditure on health and education of different expenditure classes.

Understanding the 'dance steps of numbers'

Atanu Biswas

is Professor of Statistics, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata

Getting to know the causality underlying a phenomenon should serve as the foundation for any data analysis

In a write-up in *Sankhyā: The Indian Journal of Statistics*, in 1935, Tagore referred to the magic of mathematics as "the dance steps of numbers in the arena of time and space, which weave the *maya* of appearance, the incessant flow of changes that ever is and is not". As today's data-obsessed world aspires to make data-driven decisions on every bit of life and lifestyle, one has to determine how the "*maya*" is woven and what data might genuinely offer.

Analyses and findings

An example first. The findings of a study that provided independent analysts with nearly four million words from roughly 8,000 comments in an online academic forum were described in a paper in *Organisational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes* (2021) by a large collaborative group of scientists. The study posed two straightforward hypotheses about how gender and academic status influence contributions to the forum's discussions. Within 29 studies, radically varied analyses and dispersed empirical findings were reported; several cases had significant effects in opposite directions for the same research question. Had it been only a single analyst using a single method, one would have stopped at that result.

What is mentioned above is but one instance of conflicting conclusions drawn from the same data by several experts. Such situations may, of course, cause a great deal of controversy if the data and/or topic are of public interest. Such a situation may seem weird at first. As a result, the common person is perplexed; they are unsure about the causes of these discrepancies and, more crucially, whose analysis to trust. Even experts struggle to comprehend the merits of various contradictory conclusions.

Well, statistical analyses are not unique, especially when different methodologies are used. Interestingly, depending on the models and associated margins of error, all findings could be correct, even if they are contradictory in nature. However, certain analyses may contain significant errors. But it is never easy to identify them, even for experts. The history of civilisation shows that the conclusions drawn from the simple observation that the sun crosses the sky every day could even be varied and contradictory. It took centuries to settle the issue. Thus, domain expertise is necessary; generic statistical aptitude alone is insufficient, so far as data analyses are concerned.

Anchored to a 'model'

How is it possible that the same data could lead to contradictory conclusions? This is normal, though, as statistical analyses rely on an underlying "model" to explain the pattern of the data. The decision-making processes depend heavily on these models, the relevant metrics, and the associated margin of error for drawing conclusions. While any statistical decision is subject to some margin of error, a common person is frequently unaware of this. Additionally, models are created using the expertise and judgement of the statisticians concerned. Interestingly, George E.P. Box, a British statistician, is credited with the famous quote: "All models are wrong, but some are useful". And a "suitable" model is frequently not statistically chosen before doing an analysis.

Thus, understanding the causality underlying a phenomenon should serve as the foundation for any data analysis. Let us consider a well-known example: the gender bias data for admissions for the autumn of 1973 at the University of California, Berkeley. According to the data, just 35% of women applicants were admitted, compared to 44% of men who applied – a significant enough difference to be explained by chance. A comprehensive examination of the data, however, revealed that different departments had varying degrees of difficulty admitting students; and that men tended to apply to less competitive departments with higher acceptance rates, while women tended to apply to more competitive departments with lower admission rates. The department-wise data actually revealed a "small but statistically significant bias in favor of women".

In Delhi, in 1947

Sensing the heartbeats of data is a tricky task in itself. Another example. A few members of a minority community took refuge in the Red Fort during the communal riots in Delhi in 1947. The number was unknown to the government, and contractors hired to feed them charged high amounts. A team from the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) obtained three estimates of the number by dividing the quantities of rice, pulses and salt used per day, as quoted by the contractors by the respective per capita requirements of these commodities. The estimate obtained by rice was the largest, and the salt estimate was the least. Since rice was the most expensive, its quantity was presumably inflated. And because salt was inexpensive, the contractors did not use it that way. The ISI team suggested using the quantity obtained from salt as an estimate of the number of refugees.

It demonstrates how statistical expertise, wisdom, and a solid understanding of reality are all essential for fully grasping "the dance steps of numbers". But extracting the best out of data is never easy. Only top statistical experts, along with experts with domain knowledge, may, at most, aspire to perform that job.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

India of the future

The Editorial page article, "A brief history of India's present" (August 15), gave a scary picture of the future India should such a situation arise. The picture portrayed is comparable to what Pakistan is today.

K. Nehru Patnaik,
Visakhapatnam

The article depicted the realities that exist presently in the country under narrow-minded governance, which is leading to chaos and violence in some parts of the country, especially in central India.

Srinivas Kanda,
Visakhapatnam

The article was very negative. As the writer is based in the United States, I wonder whether she could instead write about the U.S., giving us a candid account of American policies, social issues and political fissures. Even the great American democracy has many problems.

Sneha Ketkar,
Bengaluru

The writer seemed to give examples to suit her narrative. There are many parts of India where minority families reside safely.

Duggaraju Srinivasa Rao,
Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

Contrary to the views expressed by the writer, violence against the minorities has declined. Has she exaggerated events? There is tremendous growth and development across India. And, the stature of the nation has grown under a corruption-free government. The article was not an honest essay.

R. Narasimhan,
Chennai

'Only generic medicines'

Reports about the new guidelines by the National Medical Commission, the apex medical regulator, asking doctors to prescribe only generic medicines or face penalties, surprise many. Sometime ago, there was a directive to doctors to write their prescriptions in legible hand. Is there any system to monitor the implementation of such directions? Many doctors and patients are not sure of the efficacy of generic medicines.

There is also the price factor. If this is an issue, the government can fix affordable price bands for all medicines instead of allowing the manufacturer to fix their own price.

Another major issue is the code on unethical marketing of pharmaceutical products which continues to be a neglected area.

A.G. Rajmohan,
Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh

Entry fee, in Varanasi

I am travelling in this beautiful country that India is, having visited several 'sacred places' in north India. While I was treated very well in many places, I found visiting the Kashi Vishwanath temple to be stressful. Foreigners are not allowed to visit a temple or even walk closer than 50 metres to the temple. The only way to get closer is to buy a 'VIP ticket' which costs ₹600. This information is not made clear at the entrance. One is told this only after standing in a queue and security checks. When I wanted to speak to the management of this temple complex, I was told that I can write out a message which would be passed on. Officials at the temple were unable to show me proof that a foreigner has to pay ₹600.

David Levinsky,
New Delhi

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address.

Awaiting the age of moderation

A. Faizur Rahman

is Secretary-General of the Islamic Forum for the Promotion of Moderate Thought.
E-mail: themoderates2020@gmail.com

In July, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), a coalition of 57 Muslim countries, suspended the status of Sweden's special envoy, accusing the Scandinavian nation of enabling "the repeated abuse of the sanctity of the Holy Quran and Islamic symbols". One reason for this sort of Islamophobia to rage across the world is the failure of Muslim societies to question clerical interpretations that present Islam as an exclusivist and intolerant religion.

While Muslim supremacism is over a millennium old, its prevalence today owes mainly to the mid-eighteenth century religio-political pact between Muhammad bin Saud (1687-1765), founder of the Saudi kingdom, and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), founder of modern Salafism. The pact sought autarchic assent for imposing the blinkered Wahhabi interpretation across Arabia. In return, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab promised to provide theological underpinning to Saud's rule over the region.

In *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam,* Gilles Kepel describes how, after the discovery of oil, the Saudis internationally spread and normalised Wahhabi thought through the liberal distribution of charity, *Koran* translations, and construction of mosques in Muslim societies.

In an allusive acknowledgement of this fact, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) told *The Washington Post* in March 2018 that investments in mosques and madrassas overseas were rooted in the Cold War, when allies asked Saudi Arabia to use its resources to prevent inroads in Muslim countries by the Soviet Union.

Nonetheless, MBS's public recantation of the Wahhabi ideology and his push for moderate interpretations of Islam is an epochal moment in the history of Saudi Arabia which needs to be supported because of the transformative impact it is likely to have on Sunni Islam.

In pursuance of Islamic moderation, Secretary-General of the Mecca-based Muslim World League (MWL), Mr. Mohammed bin Abdul-Karim Al-Issa, was in India last month to talk about the need for an "alliance of civilisations" to counter the fatalistic idea of "clash of civilisations". The MWL is the force behind the promotion of what it calls the "Prophetic approach of moderation".

In his address at the India Islamic Cultural Centre (IICC) on July 11 in Delhi, Al-Issa stated that Islam is a tolerant and open religion which obliges Muslims to live in peace with everyone.

The inherent tolerance of Islam needed to be highlighted because the aetiological roots of the extremism exhibited by groups such as the Taliban lie in their arrogant otherisation of non-Muslims as *kafirs*. But the *Koranic kafir* is not a non-Muslim. It is anyone who wilfully rejects and suppresses truth, or is ungrateful. Thus it is not religious belief but thanklessness and repudiation of established facts that make a person a *kafir*.

If Muslims today are in the dark about the philosophy of language and intentionality of the *Koran*, it is because sectarian exegetes have distorted it beyond recognition. To give just one example, *The Noble Quran* (one of the most widely distributed English translations from Saudi Arabia) renders a prayer in verses 1: 6-7 as, *"Guide us to the Straight Way. The Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger (such as the Jews), nor of those who went astray (such as the Christians)"*.

The reference to Jews and Christians is not part of the Arabic text of the *Koran*. This parenthetical interpolation (which is freely accessible online) indoctrinates Muslims to look down upon the followers of Judaism and Christianity in violation of the *Koran*'s original meaning. The *Koran* in 5:77 prohibits such travesties of facts and tells Muslims that the promotion of anything other than the truth (*ghairal haq*) is an act of extremism (*ghulu*). If the moderateness of Islam is to be successfully propagated across the globe, Saudi authorities must see to it that translations disseminated from their soil are re-examined and changed to reflect the original intent of the *Koran*.

The Muslim community in India is perhaps the only Islamic society in the world which did not succumb to extremist ideology. This fact stood endorsed when India's National Security Advisor Mr. Ajit Doval, speaking at the IICC, noted that despite their huge population, involvement of Indian Muslims in global terrorism has been "incredibly low".

Mr. Doval warned that if communities don't sail together, they are "doomed to sink together". This compelling advocacy of communal cooperation needs to percolate down because the progress of our country could be seriously affected by needless violence of the horrifying kind witnessed recently in Manipur and Haryana. In the context of Islamophobia, the lynching of Muslims in the name of saving Hindus and their religion, burning of mosques, calling for the economic boycott of Muslims, and ultimatums to Muslims to leave town or vacate houses should open our eyes to the stark reality that moderation needs to be practised not just by members of any one community.

The perpetrators of the aforementioned atrocities must, therefore, be made to understand that the assimilative pluralism of Hinduism is so wide in scope that it accommodates diverse philosophies, including the atheistic Charvaaka thought. Then, why can't Islam, Christianity, and other religious or non-religious belief systems peacefully co-exist with Hinduism in a democratic India?

In the end, self-restraint and moderateness are mechanisms of sociological transmutation. If we do not use them to convert hate into harmony, peace and progress would remain elusive.

Now is the time for all communities to work on propagating religious moderateness

A calculated risk for Assembly polls

Telangana's parties are vying to put out the candidate list well in advance

STATE OF PLAY

Ravi Reddy
ravi.reddy@thehindu.co.in

Major political parties in Telangana – the Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS), Congress and the BJP – appear to have adopted a twin-pronged strategy to win the year-end Assembly elections by first announcing candidates for the 119 seats ahead of the election notification.

The BRS head and Chief Minister, K. Chandrashekhar Rao, based on a series of surveys conducted by independent agencies and internal feedback from ground-level sources, has shortlisted the names for the upcoming elections. Mr. Rao has assured the sitting MLAs that they are likely to get the nod yet again. Only in the worst-case scenario, incumbent legislators with a dismal track record and facing strong anti-incumbency may be dumped.

Mr. Rao intends to replicate his experiment in the 2018 elections by announcing the list of BRS (then TRS) candidates in advance. That year, all the sitting BRS MLAs got the ticket. Evidently, the Congress and the BJP – not having started the exercise by then – were in a state of shock. The gamble paid off as the BRS won 88 seats in the election, leaving the Opposition parties in tatters.

The credit for starting this practice goes to the erstwhile united Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, the late Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, who ensured that the Congress party came out with a list of 293 candidates out of 294 Assembly seats for the 2009 elections. Even the die-hard Congress supporters were shocked at how Mr. Reddy managed to convince the party's high command and get the list cleared without any changes.

Taking a cue from Mr. Reddy's feat, the Telangana Congress party, known for dissension, intra-party rivalry and one-upmanship among the senior leaders, is trying to repeat the same strategy. A high-level committee under the direct supervision of AICC has been constituted to shortlist the candidates and announce the same in advance.

The Congress party, banking heavily on poll strategist Sunil Konugolu's action plan and survey, is expected to announce the first list of constituencies where it stands a good chance of winning the polls. Then comes the seats where it can put up a tough fight and hope to turn the tables on the ruling party nominees. Then, there are seats where its chances are bleak.

The BJP, struggling with strong internal bickering between the old-timers, newcomers and defectors from the other parties, is slowly setting its house in order. The party has just overcome the strong resentment and backlash it had faced after unceremoniously dumping Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay as the party chief and elevating Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy as the State president and Huzurabad MLA Eatela Rajender as the BJP Election Management Committee chairman. The situation has been defused to some extent with Mr. Sanjay getting the coveted BJP national general secretary post.

The party is now in the process of identifying the constituencies where it hopes to come out victorious. It is a known fact that the BJP still lacks grassroots committees in several constituencies. However, that has not deterred it from attempting to announce the candidates early.

The plan to name the candidates well in advance has its pros and cons. These parties will be in a position to get first-hand feedback on their choice of candidates. If there is resentment among the cadres, they can take remedial action.

The parties also get to know the mood of the other strong aspirants who fail to get the tickets. The leadership will be in a position to pacify the disappointed aspirants with an assurance of some kind of future reward in the post-election period.

The flip side of the exercise is that it will give scope for disgruntled elements to quit the party. The ruling BRS will be at a disadvantage as denying tickets to the sitting members may give parties like the BJP a chance to woo them. The State BJP unit has a committee to coordinate people joining from other parties.

Parties such as the Congress and the BJP will have to tackle the heartburn among established leaders in some constituencies where ruling party leaders are welcomed into the party fold. Giving tickets to such defectors will lead to dissidence, slimming down the chances of victory.

On the whole, principal parties will be taking a calculated risk in naming their candidates in advance. As the State heads for polls this year-end, it is going to be an interesting run for all parties, particularly the BRS that hopes to score a hat-trick.

Tomato prices behind high inflation, south India most hit

Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana recorded high vegetable inflation in July

DATA POINT

Vignesh Radhakrishnan
Rebecca Rose Varghese

Retail inflation of tomatoes accelerated to over 200% in July – the highest-ever since at least January 2015. This in turn pushed up vegetable inflation, which quickened to 37%, leading to food and beverage inflation accelerating to 10.5% – both highest in 40 months. This was the major reason behind the sharp spike in retail inflation (7.4%) in July, the highest in 15 months. **Chart 1** shows the retail inflation of tomatoes, vegetables, food and beverages and all products combined between January 2015 and July 2023.

While deciding which items drove up or down inflation, it is imperative to consider the weight each item carries in the final inflation calculation. **Table 2** shows the main groups which constitute the retail inflation calculation. The main group includes food & beverages, clothing & footwear, housing, intoxicants and fuel & light. Their weights in the inflation calculation and their retail inflation in July 2023 are mentioned.

As shown in **Table 2**, in July 2023, the food and beverages group's inflation accelerated to 10.5%, the highest among all groups. More importantly, the food and beverages group carries the most weight in the retail inflation calculation. Put together, the component which carries the biggest weight in inflation calculation, recorded the most inflation, leading to the rapid increase in retail inflation from 4.87% in June to 7.44% in July.

Table 3 shows the sub-groups which constitute the food and beverages main group. Each sub-groups' weight in the inflation calculation and its retail inflation in July 2023 are mentioned. The vegetable sub-group's inflation accelerated to 37.3%, the highest among all sub-groups. Cereals & products and milk & products carry a bigger weight than vegetables. However their inflation rates were much lower than the latter. This shows that vegetables were the major reason behind the sudden spike in food and beverage inflation.

Notably, only oils and fats component of the food and beverage sub-group recorded a deflation in July. However the item carries half the weight of vegetables in the calculation.

Table 4 shows the items that constitute the vegetable sub-group. The vegetable sub-group consists of tomato, ginger, garlic, green chillies, parwal, brinjal, lady's finger, beans, cauliflower, radish, onion, carrot, peas, lemon, cabbage and potato. Each vegetable's weight in the inflation calculation and its retail inflation in July 2023 are mentioned in the table. Tomato's inflation accelerated to over 200%. Tomato also carries the third biggest weight in inflation calculation among vegetables, with only potato and onion carrying more weight. This shows that tomatoes were the major reason behind the sudden spike in vegetable inflation. While ginger prices recorded a 177% inflation, it carries three times less weight in inflation calculation than tomato, and so not necessarily contributing much to overall retail inflation figures.

The prices of peas, lemon, cabbage and potato, recorded deflation in July. Interestingly, potato deflation narrowed to 13.5% in July, the most among vegetables. And in the inflation calculation it carries the most weight among vegetables. This must have had a considerable impact in pulling down the overall vegetable inflation.

Table 5 shows the retail vegetable inflation among various States in July 2023. The top four States which recorded the most vegetable inflation are in South India.

Tomato in a pickle

The data for the charts were sourced from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. The State-wise combined weights for vegetables in inflation calculation were not available

Chart 1 | The chart shows the overall retail inflation, food & beverages inflation, vegetable inflation and tomato inflation between January 2015 and July 2023

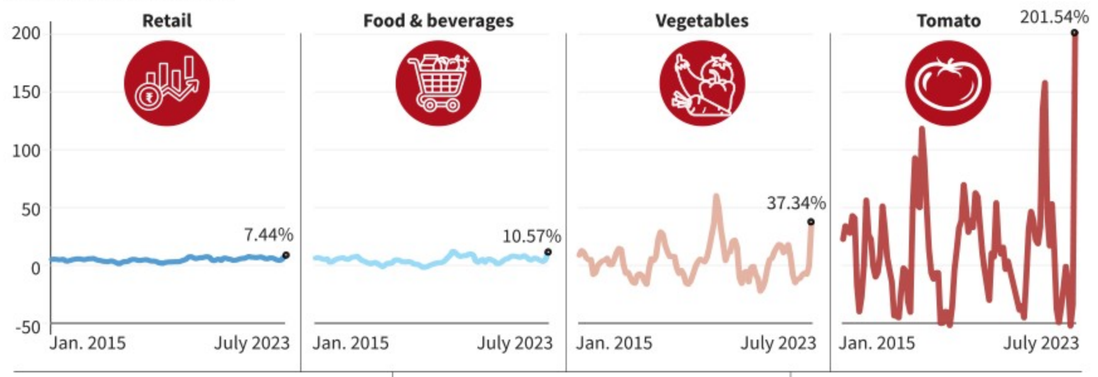


Table 2 | The table shows the main groups which constitute retail inflation calculation

Main groups	Inflation	Weight
Food and beverages	10.57	45.86
Clothing and footwear	5.64	6.53
Miscellaneous	5.05	28.32
Housing	4.47	10.07
Intoxicants	3.8	2.38
Fuel and light	3.67	6.84

Table 3 | The table shows the sub-groups which constitute the food and beverages main group

Sub-groups	Inflation	Weight
Vegetables	37.34	6.04
Spices	21.63	2.50
Pulses and products	13.27	2.38
Cereals and products	13.04	9.67
Milk and products	8.34	6.61
Prepared meals	5.51	5.55
Egg	3.82	0.43
Sugar & confectionery	3.75	1.36
Non-alcoholic beverages	3.62	1.26
Fruits	3.16	2.89
Meat and fish	2.25	3.61
Oils and fats	-16.8	3.56

Table 4 | The table shows the individual items that constitute the vegetable sub-group

Vegetables	Inflation	Weight
Tomato	201.54	0.57
Ginger	177.11	0.19
Garlic	70.09	0.31
Green chilli	50.42	0.28
Parwal	36.36	0.10
Brinjal	32.1	0.37
Lady's finger	24.19	0.28
Beans	19.93	0.14
Others	18.37	0.56
Gourd	17.66	0.24
Cauliflower	15.11	0.25
Radish	12.18	0.07
Onion	11.72	0.64
Carrot	10.44	0.09
Palak	8.8	0.44
Peas	-0.96	0.10
Lemon (No.)	-4.06	0.13
Cabbage	-9.02	0.18
Potato	-13.25	0.98

Table 5 | The table shows the retail vegetable inflation among various States in July 2023. The top four States which recorded the most vegetable inflation are in South India

State	Inflation
Tamil Nadu	74.04
Andhra	69.46
Karnataka	55.76
Telangana	54.11
M.P.	53.01
Chhattisgarh	46.09
Rajasthan	45.18
Jharkhand	42.95
Odisha	38.6
All India	37.34
Delhi	34
UP	33
Kerala	32.86
Maharashtra	31.27
Uttarakhand	30.72
Bihar	29.9
Haryana	29.36
H.P.	28.73
Punjab	27.34
Gujarat	27.33
West Bengal	25.42
J&K	13.93
Assam	1.12

vignesh.r@thehindu.co.in
rebecca.varghese@thehindu.co.in

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 16, 1973

25-Year Record for Posterity

NEW DELHI, Aug. 15.
The Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, to-day buried a time capsule at the historic Red Fort which would leave for posterity a record of events connected with the country's independence from August 15, 1947 to August 15, 1972.
The capsule contains among other items a 20,000-word history of India prepared by the Indian Council of Historical Research and recordings of important speeches made in the Constituent Assembly on August 14 and 15, 1947.
The capsule is similar to the ones buried to preserve documents relating to the life of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. It has a stainless steel outer shell and an inner shell of specially treated copper.
The inner shell, which contains, coins and films, is hermetically sealed to preserve the contents indefinitely.
The capsule also contains portraits of national leaders and a calendar of important events since 1947, all etched on copper plates. Microfilms of the Constitution and of the Bhakra-Nangal Project are also enclosed.
The Institute of Applied Manpower Research Director, Mr. Chandrakant, was the Coordinator of Committee set by the Education Ministry to work out the details connected with the capsule.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 16, 1923

Weighing A Sunbeam.

It is now possible to measure the ten-thousandth part of an inch, so accurate have our scientific instruments become; indeed, the ball bearings in your bicycle call for this precision in their manufacture.
A machine exists with which it is possible to rule nearly thirty thousand lines in the space of an inch. This means that five hundred lines would occupy the space of a single full-stop!
One of the greatest accomplishments of makers of astronomical instruments is the invention of a highly polished mirror, made of metal, which splits a single beam of light into seven separate beams, each of a different colour. The seven beams in themselves constitute a single white beam.
Another instrument is so sensitive that it responds to the heat of a man's body at a distance of two hundred yards.

From Page One

Will return with report card in 2024, says Modi

"In the northeast, especially in Manipur, a period of violence has ensued, many people died, many of our mothers and sisters were disrespected," Mr. Modi said, adding that there has been news of peace being slowly established in the past few weeks. The Central and State governments were working together to resolve the issue and establish peace, he said.

Among the new initiatives by his government, the Prime Minister announced that interest rate subvention will be given to the urban poor to buy houses. Under the Vishwakarma Yojana, to be launched next month, those with traditional skills and crafts will be allocated ₹1,300 crore to ₹1,500 crore to encourage them in their craft.

Mr. Modi also announced a programme to train women in self-help groups to use and repair drones, which will be deployed in agricultural work. "We have also kept a goal of making two crore '*lakhpati didis* (sisters with at least a ₹1 lakh in resources)'," he said. The number of Jan Aushadhi Kendras will be increased from 10,000 to 25,000 in the coming years, he added.

Millennium of rejuvenation

Stressing that the trinity of demography, democracy and diversity was the country's key strength, the Prime Minister said that it was the youth and working professionals who would propel India to strengthen the foundation for a rejuvenation for the next thousand years.

India's future economic power will mainly accrue from Tier-2 and Tier-3 towns and a new middle class which will propel the country into the league of developed nations as early as in 2047, the centenary of Independence.

"There are no ifs and buts, there is a new confidence in India," he said.

However, as a warning, Prime Miniser Modi noted that modern India still remembers that the country was attacked, about 1,000 to 1,200 years ago. "One minor king of a small state lost a war, and we did not realise that the consequences of it will last for centuries, a trap of slavery lasting a thousand years".

Giving an account of his government's work culture, Mr. Modi said that the people's mandate had given him the strength to reform, and for hisfor his government, bureaucrats, and others to perform to transform. As an example, he referred to the 200 crore anti-COVID vaccine doses that were administered to citizens.

Don't blame Kukis from Myanmar: Mizoram MP

No one from the BJP has reached out to him, he said, adding that he had submitted a memorandum to Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal after failing to get an appointment with Mr. Shah during the Monsoon Session of Parliament that concluded on August 11. "The Home Minister was extremely busy due to the debate on the no-confidence motion. I was asked by our Chief Minister to submit a memorandum demanding central aid for internally displaced people from Manipur, which I gave to Mr. Sonowal," Mr. Vanlalvena said.

Around 12,000 people from Manipur took refuge in Mizoram after ethnic violence between the tribal Kuki-Zo people and the Meitei community erupted in Manipur on May 3. Last week, the Centre released ₹3 crore to the Mizoram government for the internally displaced people from Manipur, though the State had asked for ₹10 crore, Mr. Vanlalvena said.

Since the February 2021 military coup in Myanmar, there has been an influx of undocumented migrants from there. Over 40,000 refugees took shelter in Mizoram, while around 4,000 refugees are said to have entered Manipur. These migrants belong to the Kuki-Chin-Zo ethnic group, and share ethnic ties with the communities in Mizoram and Manipur.

'Refugees not to blame'

Mr. Vanlalvena said it was incorrect to blame the refugees for the violence. "I wanted to say in Parliament that all this problem is not created by Myanmar Kukis. More than 40,000 refugees from Myanmar came to Mizoram, they did not create any trouble. But Manipur government has stopped them since the beginning of military coup; if somebody entered, they arrest and put them in jail," he said. "How were all disturbances created by Myanmar refugees alone? In Imphal, many houses and churches were burnt, all these buildings were not built by Myanmar refugees. It has been there in Manipur before the military coup, [so to say that] some tribals entered Mizoram and Manipur and created this trouble is incorrect," he said.

Mr. Vanlalvena added that the Meitei community in Mizoram was safe. "Here in Aizawl, a shop run by a Meitei opposite my house is operating smoothly, there is no objection," he said.

On August 10, while intervening in the no-confidence motion moved by the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, the Home Minister had said that the conflict in the neighbouring "Brahmadesh" (Myanmar) had led to a lot of Kuki people crossing over to India through Manipur for their safety, as the international border in the State is under a Free Movement Regime (FMR). This influx, he said, had contributed to insecurity among the majority population of Manipur – the Meiteis – about purported large-scale demographic changes; what added to the tension was a rumour on April 29 that such migrant settlements have been declared "revenue villages".

With amended Act kicking in, Odisha has no 'deemed forest'

Experts say the State government's interpretation of the Forest Act will end up accelerating deforestation; the order sent to district officials is in conflict with Environment Ministry's assurances that 'deemed forests' will remain protected

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The Odisha government with expert committees at the district level had identified nearly 66 lakh acres as 'deemed forest'. FILE PHOTO

The Odisha government has sent a letter to district officials underlining that industry requests to divert forest land for non-forestry purposes now ought to conform with the amended Forest Act and that "deemed forests" as a category will cease to exist.

'Deemed forest' is forest land that has not been notified as such by the Centre or States. The 1996 *Godavarman* verdict by the Supreme Court enjoined States to bring in such unrecorded land that conformed to the 'dictionary' meaning of forest.

Nearly half of Odisha's forest land was "deemed forest", experts told *The Hindu* adding that the Odisha government's interpretation of the Forest Act would end up accelerating the razing of forests. The Odisha government's order likely conflicts with the Environment Ministry's assurances to a parliamentary committee that "deemed forests" would continue to be protected.

"The amended Act clearly specifies and defines forest. The concept of deemed forest is now removed," says an August 11 letter by Satyabrata Sahu, Additional Chief Secretary, Forest and Environment Department, Odisha.

Protection under the Forest Act means that land cannot be diverted without the consent of the Centre as well as gram panchayats.

It also puts the onus on those diverting land to grow trees on an equivalent plot of land twice the razed area, along with a significant monetary penalty.

The Forest Act, 1980, now renamed as the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam – translated as Forest Conservation and Augmentation – only accords protection to a forest that has been declared so in accordance with the provisions of the Forest Act, 1927 and also land that has been specifically notified as forest on or after October 25, 1980. In 1996, the Supreme Court expanded the remit of the Act to areas that were not notified as forest but conformed to the "dictionary" definition of forests.

Expert committees

The States were expected to form expert committees and identify plots of land that were encapsulated under this definition.

However not all States submitted these reports, leaving considerable leeway to States to define, or leave out large parcels of land from the definition of forest. The Ministry of Environment, which brought in the amendments, said the changes to the 1980 Act were necessary to remove ambiguities and bring clarity to where forest laws could be applied.

If notified forest land was legally diverted between 1980 and 1996, for non-forest use, the Forest Conservation Act would not apply, the amended Act says. In effect, this means that unless forest land was specifically notified as such it would cease to be protected.

However, the Environment Ministry clarified to a Joint Parliamentary Committee, constituted to examine provisions of the Bill, that the amendments did not fall afoul of the 1996 Supreme Court judgment.

The Odisha government, since 1996, had with the help of expert committees at the district level identified nearly 66 lakh acres as 'deemed forest' but many of them were not officially notified as such in government records, said Tushar Dash, who researches forest rights.

"This would be at least 40-50% of the State's total forest land," he told *The Hindu*.

"What the new amendments mean is that there will be no check on forest diversion. It will be easier to divert forest land. The reality on the ground is that most of the forest officer bureaucracy isn't too keen on protecting forest rights," Aurobindo Behera, a former Principal Secretary in Odisha's Forest department, told *The Hindu*.

4 Nagaland villages pledge to oppose forest Act

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Four village councils in the Sendenyu area of Nagaland's Tseminyu district have initiated a movement against the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 2023, passed in Parliament on August 2.

These village councils (VCs) of the Rengma Naga community have appealed to the VCs of all Naga tribes across Nagaland to take up the matter of "great urgency and imminent crisis" to create pressure on the State government so that the 60-member Assembly rejects the Act.

On August 12, the members of these four VCs pledged to oppose the Act "designed against the interests of the indigenous communities" to ensure that the "rights bestowed by our ancestors do not go in vain in the name of so-called national importance and security".

The Act, the VCs pointed out, also challenges the "very essence of traditional customary and indigenous ownership-rights of the people over their land and forest".

Russian-made stealth frigates delayed yet again; now expected in May, Oct.

Dinakar Peri
MOSCOW

In October 2016, India and Russia signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement for four stealth frigates

The war in Ukraine has caused further delays to the delivery of two Krivakor Talwar-class stealth frigates under construction for the Indian Navy in Russia. They are now expected to be delivered by May and October in 2024, respectively, according to Alexey Rakhmanov, Director-General of the United Shipbuilding Corporation of Russia.

"The ship is in the final stages of development; in two months time, it will go for sea trials," Mr. Rakhmanov said, in response to a question from *The Hindu* at Russia's ongoing Army 2023 military expo. The supply of some equipment has seen delays, he said, adding that some equipment has "made sort of a round-the-globe trip" to reach Russia due to the Western sanctions. Payment delays has also played a part, he said. These two frigates were originally supposed to have arrived in mid-2022, but COVID-19 disruptions caused the initial pushback of delivery dates.

On wider cooperation with India, Mr. Rahkmanov said that his state-owned company was in talks with the Indian Navy to construct at least five or six different vessels, but declined to go into the specifics.

Frigate deal

In October 2016, India and Russia signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement for four stealth frigates, after which a $1-billion deal was signed for direct purchase. The basic structures of the first two frigates were lying at the Yantar shipyard in Russia, and are now being finished.

In November 2018, Goa Shipyard Ltd. (GSL) signed a $500-million deal with Russia's Rosoboronexport for material, design and specialist assistance to locally manufacture the other two frigates, and in January 2019, the contract was signed between the Indian Defence Ministry and GSL.

These two stealth frigates are currently under construction at the GSL and deliveries will be fixed according to the payment schedule, Mr, Rakhmanov said.

The Indian Navy already operates six of these frigates weighing around 4,000 tonnes each.

As *The Hindu* has earlier reported, with Russia being shut out of the global SWIFT system for money transfers, India and Russia are now trying to settle payments through a Rupee-Rouble arrangement. However, given the trade imbalance, rupees are accumulating, causing issues.

(The writer was at the Army 2023 expo on the invitation of Rubin Design Bureau of Russia.)

Caught between Taliban curbs and India's 'no-visa policy'

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

The Taliban security personnel celebrates second anniversary of their takeover in Herat.

As bombs rained down and gunfire boomed around the Afghan city of Herat, 26-year-old Iqra, an Indian citizen, was jolted out of a idyllic holiday with her husband Shehzad (name changed on request), an Afghan national, two years ago. On India's Independence Day this year, also the anniversary of the day the Taliban took Kabul, Ms. Iqra says she wants nothing more than savouring the freedom of being home with her husband and one-year-old daughter.

"In front of my eyes, Afghanistan totally changed [on August 15], the same day each year my own country celebrates its Independence. I would give anything to be there with my whole family this Independence Day," Ms. Iqra told *The Hindu*.

On a visit to Afghanistan, Mr. Shehzad was offered a post in the Afghanistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2020, then under the Afghan Republic government of President Ashraf Ghani, and he jumped at the opportunity of returning to India to work in the Afghan Embassy in Delhi. As he returned to his family in Herat, Ms. Iqra stayed back in Aligarh, but as the diplomatic paperwork for Mr. Shehzad was delayed at the Indian Embassy, Ms. Iqra decided to get on a flight to Afghanistan in early July 2021.

Between the Taliban's stringent strictures on women that have been issued since then, including not allowing them to study, leave home unescorted, or even walk in a public park, and the restricted visa policy of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) for Afghans, Ms. Iqra is virtually imprisoned, her passport has expired and her husband, who is entitled to travel to India as her spouse, has had no reply to his application for the special "Emergency-misc-X-Visa".

Mr. Shahzad is not alone – according to official estimates, about 60,000 Afghans have applied for the Emergency-misc-X-Visas, a category started by the MEA and Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) after the fall of Kabul.

The Indian government's seemingly unofficial no-visa "policy" has led to the division of families, stopped students from completing degrees, and held up business worth crores of rupees, Afghans say.

According to sources, former Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who has repeatedly called on India not to "abandon" Afghans, has recently written to the Indian Prime Minister, raising the issue of non-issuance of visas.

Bindeshwar Pathak, who brought in public toilet revolution, dies at 80

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Social innovator: Bindeshwar Pathak's work helped bring toilet access to places in remote parts of the country. FILE PHOTO

Bindeshwar Pathak, Sulabh International founder, Padma Bhushan recipient, and social worker, on Tuesday died of a cardiac arrest at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Delhi, shortly after he was brought in to the hospital. He was 80.

Credited with bringing in the revolutionary Sulabh Complex public toilet system to India, which contributed significantly to reducing open-defecation and manual scavenging, Mr. Pathak was closely associated with his non-profit and "worked till the end", said his associates.

AIIMS sources told *The Hindu* that Mr. Pathak was brought into the hospital at 1.15 p.m. on Tuesday, shortly after which he suffered a cardiac arrest and died at 1.42 p.m.

Mr. Pathak is survived by his wife, a son and two daughters and the death has come as a shock to family members and all those close to him, said Madan Jha, who worked with him at Sulabh International for nearly two decades now.

"He was singing and dancing till yesterday. Even today, he was at the Independence Day celebrations at Sulabh Complex in Delhi," Mr. Jha, 54, told *The Hindu*.

Condolences from PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his condolences in a post on X (formerly Twitter), saying, "The passing away of Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak Ji is a profound loss for our nation. He was a visionary who worked extensively for societal progress and empowering the downtrodden. Bindeshwar Ji made it his mission to build a cleaner India.

"He provided monumental support to the Swachh Bharat Mission. During our various conversations, his passion towards Swachhata was always visible. His work will continue to inspire several people. My deepest condolences to his family and loved ones during this difficult time. Om Shanti."

President Droupadi Murmu also expressed her grief at Mr. Pathak's passing, saying, "Shri Pathak had taken a revolutionary initiative in the field of cleanliness. He was honoured with many awards including Padma Bhushan. I express my condolences to his family and members of Sulabh International."

Born and educated in Bihar, Mr. Pathak had founded Sulabh International Social Services Organisation in 1970 to introduce a public toilet system in India that would go on to become a feature of hundreds of towns.

He was given the Padma Bhushan in 1991 for social work and he later became an ambassador for the government's Swachh Bharat Mission.

Over time, Sulabh International also contributed to the welfare of people engaged in manual scavenging and helped them come out of the occupation.

The organisation was gven the Gandhi Peace Prize for 2016, jointly with the Akshaya Patra Foundation.

APPEAL

Baby Abdul Kani, 1 year old, needs your support in bringing a lasting change and a new life. He is diagnosed to have Complex open Heart Surgery at Madras Medical Mission Chennai. He urgently needs Rs. 3,90,000/- for his surgery. Donations sent by Ch/D.D. favouring **Madras Medical Mission Chennai. Will be acknowledged.** The donations sent through Ch/D.D./NEFT Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C.No: 60182010063310, IFSC No: CNRB0016018) favouring **WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE** is exempted under 80G IT **(Please do not mention patient name on the cheque).**

All correspondence is done through WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, **Flat No. GF 1, Corddel Apartments, O.No.13. N.No.29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 044-42137401/ 28235324/ 7338978027. E Mail ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com.**

WWS

All guns blazing: (from left) The indigenously developed 105-mm light field guns being fired — for the first time during a ceremonial gun salute — at the Independence Day celebration in New Delhi on Tuesday; an Air Force helicopter showers petals after Prime Minister Narendra Modi unfurled the National Flag at the ramparts of the Red Fort; people queue up outside the Bakshi Stadium in Srinagar to attend the parade; and students join the celebrations in South Mumbai. PTI, SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR, NISSAR AHMAD & EMMANUAL YOGINI

Vishwakarma Yojana soon for traditional artisans: PM

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his Independence Day address to the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on Tuesday, announced a scheme for artisans – Vishwakarma Yojana – with an allocation of up to ₹15,000 crore to help skill development among the youth. Mr. Modi also promised drones for women self-help groups (SHGs) to be be used for agricultural work.

"Families of weavers, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, laundry workers, barbers, and others will be empowered through the 'Vishwakarma Yojana'," he said.

Mr. Modi said the Centre was working with women's SHGs with the aim of creating two crore *lakhpati didis* in villages.

He said that 15,000 women's SHGs would be given loan and training for operating and repairing drones. "We will initiate making drone services available for our agricultural work," he said.

The Opposition was not amused by these promises. CPI general secretary D. Raja said the PM's speech was like an election speech. "The speech was full of rhetoric," he said.

PM announces new housing scheme for urban poor; low interest rate loans on offer

The initiative will benefit families that live in unauthorised colonies, slums or rented houses in various cities, says Modi; he adds that weaker sections living in cities faced a plethora of problems

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday announced a new scheme to help the urban poor build houses in cities. Under this programme, they will receive relief in interest rates and loans taken from banks to construct their houses.

Addressing the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the occasion of the 77th Independence Day, Mr. Modi said that weaker sections who lived in cities faced a plethora of problems.

Proud moment: Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, Ministers Rajnath Singh, Piyush Goyal, Amit Shah, Nitin Gadkari, and Anurag Thakur, and others at the Independence Day celebration. ANI

Poor facilities

"Middle-class families are dreaming of buying their own houses. We are coming up with a new scheme in the coming years that will benefit those families that live in cities but are living in rented houses, or slums, or *chawls* and unauthorised colonies," he said.

The Prime Minister said that if this section wanted to build their own houses, the government would assist them with a relief in interest rates and loans from banks that would help them save lakhs of rupees.

Flagship mission

The government already has a scheme to address the housing shortage for the urban poor called the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban (PMAY-U), which was launched in 2015.

The PMAY-U is a flagship mission of the government which is implemented by the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry. The mission aims to address the urban housing shortage among the economically backward sections, including the slum dwellers by ensuring a *pucca* house to all eligible urban households by 2022.

The scheme period though now has been extended up to December 2024 to complete all the houses sanctioned without changing the funding pattern and implementation methodology.

A total of 75.51 lakh houses have been completed out of which 71.39 lakh have been occupied till now under the PMAY-U, the government had informed the Rajya Sabha.

Uttar Pradesh had the largest number of houses completed at 12,87,307. Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh were other high-performing States with 8,80,209 and 8,08,278 houses completed. The number for Tamil Nadu was 5,30,350.

The Centre has released a ₹1.48 lakh crore assistance to the States, the government said in the reply.

Kharge skips PM's Red Fort address; Congress calls it a 'crass election speech'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Even as the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge skipped Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address to the nation from the Red Fort, triggering a controversy, the Congress described Mr. Modi's speech as a "crass election speech".

Asked about his absence from the programme at the Red Fort, Mr. Kharge gave a number of reasons – from having an eye problem to stating that the Prime Minister's security protocol would not have allowed him to reach on time from the All India Congress Committee (AICC) headquarters, where he hoisted the National Flag.

The AICC flag-hoisting ceremony was attended by senior party leaders, including Rahul Gandhi.

In his speech, Mr. Kharge referred to his own microphone being switched off in Parliament, and alleged that the Opposition's voice is being muzzled by expunging words and moving privilege motions.

He said searches by the Central Bureau of Investigation, Enforcement Directorate and Income Tax Department were being carried out against Opposition leaders, and that the Election Commission of India was being weakened.

Mallikarjun Kharge

"It pains me to say that today, democracy, Constitution, and autonomous institutions – all three are in great danger," Mr. Kharge said.

'Voice of Indians'

Mr. Gandhi's Independence Day message posted on X (formerly Twitter) said: "My Mother India is not just a piece of land, but it is the voice of every Indian".

Drawing on his experience from the Bharat Jodo Yatra, Mr. Gandhi shared a nearly three-minute video to convey the message.

"My beloved *Bharat Mata* was not a land. It wasn't a set of ideas. It wasn't a particular culture, history or religion. India was the voice of every single Indian. India was the happiness, the fear and the pain hidden deep inside all the voices," Mr. Gandhi said in the video.

In the official response to Mr. Modi's speech, Congress communication chief Jairam Ramesh gave a point-by-point rebuttal, and said the Prime Minister had made it all about himself and his image instead of bringing the country together on Independence Day.

The former Union Minister accused the Prime Minister of addressing the devastation in Manipur casually by comparing it to incidents in other parts of the country and showed no sorrow for Manipur turning into a war zone because of the government's failures.

Mr. Ramesh said that while talking about India's capabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Prime Minister had failed to mention "inadequate oxygen supplies and the PM's failure to order adequate vaccines in a timely manner", which ended in 40 lakh COVID deaths.

India's guests: Ro Khanna (third from right) with the U.S. delegation at the Red Fort on Tuesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Gandhiji was one of the greatest ethical leaders: Ro Khanna

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Calling Mahatma Gandhi the person who has had the "most influence" in his life, United States Congressman Ro Khanna paid tributes at the Rajghat on Tuesday as part of a four-day visit by a bipartisan U.S. congressional delegation to India. The delegation, hosted by the Ministry of External Affairs, also attended Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence day address at the Red Fort, which Mr. Khanna called a "meaningful" occasion.

The delegation is due to meet Mr. Modi and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar before flying back to Washington on Wednesday.

"I believe Gandhi is one of the greatest ethical leaders that humanity has ever had, and the world must still look to him for inspiration," Mr. Khanna said.

The U.S. congressional delegation is also due to meet Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

On Monday, Mr. Khanna told *PTI* that the congressional authorisation for transfer of U.S. technology required for the big-ticket deal between GE and HAL to co-produce F414 engine is "going to be a high priority" for him and U.S. Congressman Michael Waltz, who co-chairs the congressional India caucus and are leading the delegation invited to Delhi.

According to sources, the approval resolution, that was introduced in June, was brought to the U.S. congressional agenda for authorisation earlier this month.

Modi lauds health workers for their efforts during COVID

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

COVID-19 has taught us that global development is not possible without a human-centric approach, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his address to the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the occasion of Independence Day on Tuesday.

Highlighting the exemplary contributions of health workers, especially *anganwadi* and ASHA workers, Mr. Modi lauded their dedication and persistent efforts in achieving the milestone of over 200 crore COVID vaccine doses.

Fifty nurses, along with their family members, from across the country were invited as special guests to witness and participate in the Independence Day celebrations.

The PM also said that Jan Aushadhi Kendras have given new strength to the middle class by offering cumulative savings to the tune of ₹20,000 crore, and promised to expand the network from the current 10,000 to 25,000 kendras.

Noting efforts to provide universal health coverage, Mr. Modi said that the government has invested ₹70,000 crore in the Ayushman Bharat scheme.

Red Fort sees a diverse audience; G-20 Presidency an abiding theme

Mehul Malpani
Satvika Mahajan
NEW DELHI

Thousands flocked to the Red Fort on a humid but breezy Tuesday morning as Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered his 10th consecutive Independence Day address.

The attendance at this year's celebration crossed pre-pandemic levels, with more than 20,000 people present, from senior Ministers, government officials, and armed forces officers to NCC cadets, schoolchildren, and ordinary citizens from different parts of the country.

Approximately 1,800 special invitees of the Prime Minister were present, including Central Vista construction workers, village leaders, fisherfolk, teachers, and farmers.

Floral decorations, which have been the highlight of many past Independence Day celebrations, were reduced on the walls of the Red Fort this year. However, what caught every eye was the logo of the upcoming G-20 Summit, crafted with flowers. From the decorations to the audiovisuals being displayed at the venue to Mr. Modi's speech itself, references to India's G-20 presidency were ubiquitous.

With the youth: Narendra Modi interacting with NCC cadets after his speech during the celebrations of the 77th Independence Day at the Red Fort in New Delhi on Tuesday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

After paying his tributes at Mahatma Gandhi's memorial at Rajghat, Mr. Modi reached the Red Fort around 7.18 a.m. A combined Inter-Services and Delhi Police Guard presented him with a general salute, following which the PM inspected a guard of honour by a contingent of one officer and 25 personnel each from the Army, the Air Force and the Delhi Police, and one officer and 24 personnel from the Navy. Major Vikas Sangwan It commanded the contingent.

Mr. Modi then headed to the ramparts of the Red Fort and was received by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt, Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane, Chief of Defence Staff Anil Chauhan and the chiefs of the three Services.

Tight security

Assisted by Major Nikita Nair and Major Jasmine Kaur, the Prime Minister unfurled the Tricolour, which was followed by a 21-gun salute from the gunners of the elite 8711 Field Battery synchronised with the National Anthem, played by the Army Band.

At the end of Mr. Modi's speech, tricolour balloons were released into the sky, to the cheers of the crowds. Mr. Modi also interacted with NCC cadets after his speech.

Multiple security agencies made heavy arrangements to guard the Red Fort venue, the multiple routes leading to it, and the national capital. More than 5,600 personnel of the Delhi Police, SPG, NSG, SSB, CISF, CRPF and multiple SWAT teams, including women teams, were deployed at and around the Red Fort.

Heavy traffic restrictions were put in place with several checkpoints. Personnel diverted any vehicle without an invite or a parking pass to the routes away from the Red Fort.

Poor should get urea at a cheaper rate, says Modi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Centre has allocated a subsidy of ₹10 lakh crore for providing cheaper urea to farmers, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here on Tuesday during his Independence Day address. Mr. Modi said a bag of urea worth ₹3,000 in global markets is being made available to farmers at ₹300, adding that the poor should get cheap urea.

He said the Mudra Yojana, with a budget of over ₹20 lakh crore has provided opportunities for self-employment, businesses, and ventures for the youth of the country. "About eight crore people have started new businesses, and each entrepreneur has provided employment to one or two individuals," he said.

He said the internet is reaching the last mile in every village as we also aspire to go for quantum computers.

"On the one hand Nano Urea and Nano DAP are being worked upon while on the other side, we are also emphasising organic farming. Today, the Farmers Producers Association app is being built while we aspire to build semiconductors as well," Mr. Modi added.

INBRIEF

J&K being recognised for change, peace in 4 years: L-G

Jammu & Kashmir Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said the Union Territory was being recognised for its peaceful atmosphere and the change brought four years ago. Addressing a function at the Bakshi Stadium, he highlighted the change in Kashmir's situation and growing tourist footfall in Jammu & Kashmir. "Over 1.27 crore tourists visited J&K this year so far. The year has witnessed a 59% increase in foreign tourist arrivals. Jammu & Kashmir is being recognised as a place of peace and nature's beauty," Mr. Sinha said.

India became independent to enlighten the world: Bhagwat

While addressing a public gathering on the 77th Independence Day, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat said on Tuesday India attained independence to enlighten the world. Mr. Bhagwat, who hoisted the Tricolour at an event organised by Samartha Bharat at Vasavi Convention Hall in Bengaluru, also emphasised on understanding the National Flag, saying that protecting freedom is a continuous process. He also cautioned people against forces that do not want India to progress.

'9,423 SC verdicts translated into regional languages'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The project includes translating Supreme Court judgments and providing summaries of the verdicts

Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud said on Tuesday that the Supreme Court had translated 9,423 of its judgments from English to 14 regional languages. Four of the judgments have even been translated to Nepali.

He was speaking at the Supreme Court's Independence Day celebrations hours after Prime Minister Narendra Modi lauded the court in his Red Fort address for its efforts to translate its judgments to regional languages to benefit the common man.

The highest number of judgments, 8,977, have been translated to Hindi followed by Tamil at 128. Gujarati has cornered the third spot at 86, while Malayalam and Odia share the fourth spot at 50 each.

Thirty-three verdicts have been translated to Telugu, 31 to Bengali, 24 to Kannada, 20 to Marathi, 11 to Punjabi, four to Assamese, three to Urdu, and one each in Garo and Khasi. The Supreme Court's translation project began in 2019 so that its judgments could be read and understood by the public in their native regional languages.

The project started during the tenure of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi (now retired) in mid-2019. Justice Gogoi had given the credit to his successor and then number two judge, Justice S.A. Bobde, of first mooting the idea of translating the court's judgments into regional languages. Justice Bobde continued the efforts during his tenure as top judge, introducing AI tools. Chief Justice Chandrachud has taken it to new levels, by expanding the language base and increasing the speed of translations.

The project includes translating judgments and providing summaries of the court's verdicts.

SC plans expansion of infra; e-Courts to offer national link

The CJI says 'overhaul' of the court infrastructure is necessary on a priority basis to make them more accessible and inclusive, adds that new projects will modernise judicial infrastructure

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud on Tuesday announced a plan to expand the Supreme Court with 27 additional courts and 51 judges' chambers. Currently, the Supreme Court has 17 courtrooms and two registrar courts. Its judicial strength is 32 now.

In his address at the 77th Independence Day celebrations on the Supreme Court lawns, Chief Justice Chandrachud said an "overhaul" of the court infrastructure was necessary on a priority basis to make courts more accessible and inclusive. He said the emphasis of the new project would be on modernising the judicial infrastructure.

"We plan to expand the Supreme Court by constructing a new building to accommodate 27 additional courts, 51 judges' chambers, four registrar court rooms, 16 registrar chambers, and other requisite facilities for lawyers and litigants. This expansion is proposed in two phases," he said. The Chief Justice's speech did not confine itself to just an announcement of the infrastructure projects.

Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud greeting a CRPF soldier at the Independence Day celebrations on the Supreme Court lawns. ANI

He spoke on the important role judiciary played in ensuring that "institutions of governance function within the defined constitutional limits".

He also highlighted that courts provide a "safe democratic space for individuals to seek protection of their rights and liberties".

Access to justice

"The Supreme Court particularly has been the vanguard of institutional governance by enhancing access to justice and promoting constitutional values. The past 76 years suggest that the history of the Indian judiciary is the history of the daily life struggles of the Indian people. If our history teaches us anything, it is this – that no matter is big or small for the courts," he said.

He said by examining and delivering judgments on disputes and grievances, the courts were merely performing their plain constitutional duty.

He highlighted the importance of technology as the "best tool" courts could wield against the inefficiency and opacity in judicial processes and to overcome the procedural barriers to justice.

"Phase 3 of the e-Courts project seeks to revolutionise the working of courts in India by inter-linking of all courts across the country, setting up the infrastructure of paperless court, digitisation of records, and setting up advanced e-sewa kendras in all complexes," he said. Technology is also being used by the top court to make its premises and services disabled-friendly. "The court had operationalised screen readable website and case files to remove the barriers faced by the blind community in accessing the services," he noted.

Independence Day: world leaders greet PM, Indian citizens

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Several world leaders, including from Australia, Russia and France, sent congratulatory messages to Indians and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Independence Day. In his message, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese paid tribute to India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, and said the people of the two countries share "deep bonds".

"At the dawn of Independence, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru called for the people of India '...to labour and to work, and work hard, to give reality to our dreams. Those dreams are for India, but they are also for the world.' In 2023, India can reflect with pride on its success in pursuit of Nehru's dreams," he said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, in his letter to President Droupadi Murmu and Mr. Modi, said that India enjoys global respect. "India enjoys well-earned respect in the world arena and plays an important constructive role in international affairs. We attach great importance to the relations of the special and privileged strategic partnership with New Delhi," he said.

French President Emmanuel Macron said India and France have articulated a vision of cooperation till 2047 when India will mark the centenary year of its Independence.

Nepal's Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal said, "On the auspicious occasion of the 77th Independence Day, I extend warm greetings and best wishes to PM Narendra Modi *ji* and to the friendly people of India." Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth said his country is proud of the "brother ties" with India.

Mr. Modi acknowledged some of the messages including that of Prime Minister of Bhutan Lotay Tshering.

Manipur CM appeals for peace, says violence will not bring development

The Hindu Bureau
IMPHAL/GUWAHATI

N. Biren Singh inspects the Guard of Honour during the 77th Independence Day celebration in Imphal on Tuesday. ANI

Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh made a fervent appeal for peace in the State, and said the communities affected by the ongoing violence can live harmoniously by "forgiving and forgetting" and resume the journey on the path of development.

Manipur had lost out on development for the past three months, he said in his Independence Day speech amid a 13-hour shutdown called by several extremist organisations from 5 a.m. on Tuesday.

"The violence has killed over a hundred people. Thousands are homeless and hundreds of crores of properties have been destroyed. The violence will not bring any development. If there was any misunderstanding and miscommunication among the communities, we can sit across the table and discuss all the shortcomings," he said.

"For this, our door is always open," he added, in a message to the Meitei and Kuki groups to bury their differences.

Mr. Singh said his government had been strictly following the constitutional provisions to continuously work for the betterment of the people of the hills and valleys of the State. "However, some vested interests and forces from outside tried to destabilise our peace-loving State and country," he said, asserting that his government would never go against the constitutional obligation.

While appealing to the people of the State to avoid violence, he said that his government would continue to wage the war against drugs and detect, detain, and deport all illegal immigrants. "This should not be seen as against any individual or community," he insisted.

References to the ethnic violence in adjoining Manipur peppered Mizoram Chief Minister Zoramthanga's Independence Day speech, his last for the current term of the Mizo National Front (MNF) government that he heads.

Elections to the 40-member Mizoram Assembly are due by December.

"The entire country has been deeply pained by the violent ethnic conflict that erupted in our neighbouring State of Manipur on May 4. The series of unfortunate and deplorable incidents which have unfolded since then have deeply aggrieved the entire Mizo society," he said in the State's capital Aizawl.

Mr. Zoramthanga said that the MNF government has kept a close watch on Manipur since the very start of the turmoil there, and has taken a number of steps for the safety and security of Mizos who were stuck in Imphal, particularly students. The State government also took up relief and rehabilitation measures for those displaced from Manipur who had sought shelter in Mizoram, he said, adding that the State government also spent more than ₹36 lakh to airlift and evacuate 264 residents of Mizoram from Imphal.

India, China agree to resolve remaining issues, says MEA

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

> The two sides had a positive, constructive and in-depth discussion on the resolution of the remaining issues along the LAC
> **JOINT STATEMENT**

India and China agreed to resolve the remaining issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh in an expeditious manner, a joint statement said on Tuesday.

"The two sides had a positive, constructive and in-depth discussion on the resolution of the remaining issues along the LAC in the Western Sector," it said.

"In line with the guidance provided by the leadership, they exchanged views in an open and forward looking manner," the statement added.

The 19th round of India-China Corps Commander-level meeting was held at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on the Indian side on August 13 and 14. It was for the first time that the high-level military talks on the lingering border row spanned two days.

"They agreed to resolve the remaining issues in an expeditious manner and maintain the momentum of dialogue and negotiations through military and diplomatic channels," the statement released by the Ministry of External Affairs said. "In the interim, the two sides agreed to maintain the peace and tranquility on the ground in the border areas," it said.

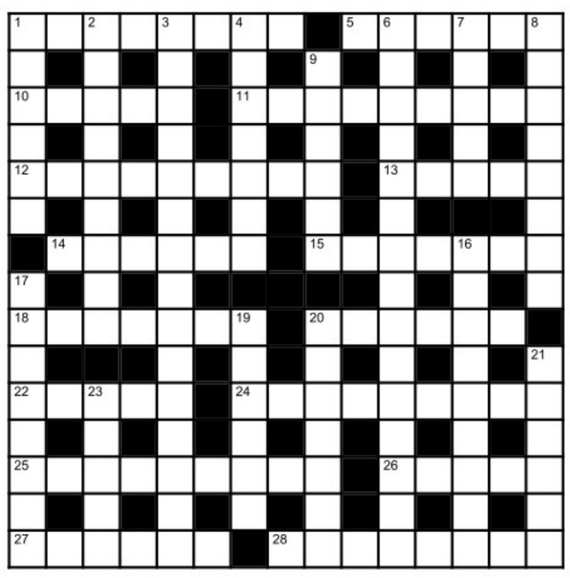
The Indian and Chinese troops are locked in an over three-year confrontation in certain friction points in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks.

TH CROSSWORD + 13945

(set by Afterdark)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Auditor's father at say, Chennai office (8)
5 Publicity is working for cooler, perhaps (6)
10 A rope trick leading to drama (5)
11 Latest dispute involving Peru seen in publication (9)
12 In the absence of leader, new revelation on promotion (9)
13 Finally wife and husband secured painting of ground (5)
14 Geared to drop daughter and take last son to get a baby cat (6)
15 Say, cleaner's wife is replaced by lady agent, perhaps (7)
18 Reckons a tree's sure to be misspelt (7)
20 Drink is No 1, top from the east (6)
22 Presses for one run on the onside, stops midway (5)
24 Someone admitted no new males will be taken, making it tense (9)
25 Finally some action to catch criminal who is hot-headed (9)
26 Elvis itching to stop excursion (5)
27 Insist princess should be put out of misery (6)
28 Almost urge first lady to block republican in pickle (8)

Down

1 Empty container filled with honey plant (6)
2 Previous pastor's returning (9)
3 Factors leads to say, President avoiding one function having sex being sent back in terrible crises (15)
4 27 = 10? Yes, in Spain! No, the other way round (7)
6 Somehow rest, spies for the most part and veteran agents (15)
7 Great meal, but wanting some pasta (5)
8 Direction to get new golden article at Rouen on vacation (8)
9 Arranges small groups... (6)
16 ...chairs for females with fresh roses (9)
17 Agents are bad at ICE, collecting rupees (8)
19 Sweden's monarch touring Italy for a recreational activity (6)
20 Priest's work's dull & dry essentially, overwhelms one in general (7)
21 Bust at once; requests Centre (6)
23 Essentially blood had hard stench (5)

SUDOKU

	8	5	6					
2			8				6	
		9				4		
	7			4	8			6
	1	4	2		9	3	7	
6			3	7			1	
		7				2		
	3				2			9
					1	6	5	

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

No.SS5890 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

Solution to previous puzzle

	T	R	I	A	G	E		P	H	I	L	I	P	
	I		R		O		A		A		A		R	
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	E		T		R		A		G		V		N	
O	R	T	E	G	A		I	M	A	G	I	N	E	D
	I				M		N		R		C		R	
A	P	P	R	A	I	S	A	L		R	I	N	S	E
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	R		M		W		A		O				E	
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Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

2	6	8	9	3	4	5	1	7
3	9	5	8	1	7	6	4	2
1	4	7	2	6	5	3	8	9
6	1	4	5	7	9	2	3	8
8	3	9	4	2	6	7	5	1
7	5	2	3	8	1	9	6	4
4	8	3	7	5	2	1	9	6
9	7	6	1	4	3	8	2	5
5	2	1	6	9	8	4	7	3

FAITH

Celebrating Parsi New Year

The Parsi New Year or *Navroz* means 'new day.' The Parsis are believers of one of the oldest monotheistic religions of the world, namely Zoroastrianism, founded more than 3,000 years ago, said Professor Kumool Abhi in a lecture.

It was the faith of people of Persia from ancient times to the period of Islamic invasion, which led to the exodus of a large number of Zoroastrians to places such as Maharashtra and Gujarat, which now account for the largest segment of Parsis in the world. In Iran and the Middle East, this new year is celebrated according to the Fasli Bastnai calendar that fixes the first day of the spring Equinox around March 21 and it is celebrated on the first day of the Zoroastrian calendar Farvardin. While the Parsis in India celebrate the new year by referring to the Shahenshah calendar, which does not account for the leap year implying that the day has moved by 200 days from the original day of the Spring Equinox, which falls today (August 16) this year.

Navroz is attributed to the mythical Iranian king Jamshid who saved humanity from an impending catastrophe and in the process initiated the beginning of a new dawn. It is believed by the Parsis that celebration of *Navroz* began with the arrival of a businessman, Nurservanji Kohyaji, to Surat in the 18th Century. The festivities begin 10 days before with Muktad, a remembrance of one's ancestors. This is followed by Pateti, where people clean their homes, decorate them with torans and flowers. Dressed in their finest, the Parsis visit fire temples (Agiary), on the morning of *Navroz*. This holy day is spent with devotion, reverence, reclaiming and reaffirming their faith.

AQBAT JABR CAMP

Israeli troops kill two Palestinians in raid on occupied West Bank

REUTERS

Israeli troops killed two Palestinians in the occupied West Bank on Tuesday, in the first deadly raid in the Jericho area for months. There has been a surge in violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in recent months, marked by raids by Israeli forces as well as deadly attacks by Palestinians and Israelis. AFP

SEOUL

South Korean President calls Japan 'partner' on Liberation Day

REUTERS

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol on Tuesday called former colonial ruler Japan a "partner" that shares his country's values and common interests as he aims to strengthen ties with Tokyo in response to North Korea's growing nuclear threats. Sourth Korea, Japan and the U.S. are set to hold a summit on Friday. AFP

MOSCOW

Putin calls for closer cooperation with N. Korea in message to Kim

REUTERS

Russian President Vladimir Putin urged Moscow and Pyongyang to deepen ties, in a congratulatory message to the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un marking the country's National Liberation Day. Russia and North Korea have drawn closer since the Kremlin deployed troops to Ukraine. AFP

KATHMANDU

Nepal PM to embark on 10-day visit to U.S. & China on Sept. 16

REUTERS

Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" will leave for a ten-day official visit to the U.S. and China on September 16. Prachanda will travel to the U.S. first, where he will attend the 78th United Nations General Assembly, scheduled from September 18 to 26. He will then fly to Beijing for a four-day journey to China. PTI

Trump indicted for colluding to overturn 2020 poll results

The case is the fourth one targeting the 77-year-old Republican leader this year and could lead to a watershed moment, the first televised trial of a former President in the history of United States

Agence France-Presse
ATLANTA

Latest setback: Prosecutors in Atlanta have charged former U.S. President Donald Trump with 13 felony counts. AFP

Donald Trump was indicted on Monday on charges of racketeering and a string of election crimes after a sprawling, two-year probe into his efforts to overturn his 2020 defeat to Joe Biden in the U.S. State of Georgia.

The case – relying on laws typically used to bring down mobsters – is the fourth targeting the 77-year-old Republican this year and could lead to a watershed moment, the first televised trial of a former President in U.S. history.

Prosecutors in Atlanta charged Mr. Trump with 13 felony counts.

Eighteen co-defendants were indicted in the probe, including Mr. Trump's former personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, who pressured local legislators over the result after the election, and Mr. Trump's White House chief of staff, Mark Meadows.

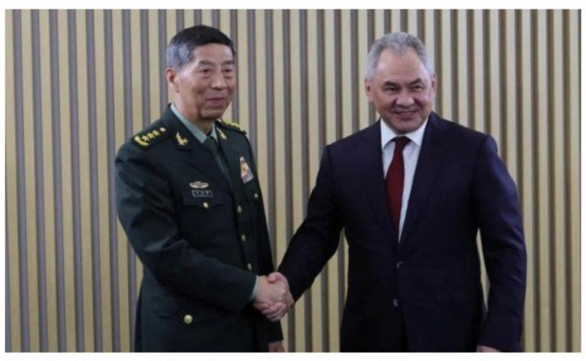
With Mr. Trump already due to go on trial in New York, south Florida and Washington, the latest charges herald the unprecedented scenario of the 2024 presidential election being litigated as much from the courtroom as the ballot box.

Fulton County prosecutor Fani Willis said Mr. Trump and his co-defendants had until noon on August 25 to "voluntarily surrender" to authorities, adding that she would like to go to trial within six months.

Meanwhile, Mr. Trump responded by posting on his Truth Social platform "So, the Witch Hunt continues!".

Ukraine's military resources 'almost exhausted': Russia

Agence France-Presse
MOSCOW



Timely ties: Russia's Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu, right, with Chinese Defence Minister Li Shangfu in Moscow on Tuesday. REUTERS

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said on Tuesday that Ukraine's military resources were "almost exhausted", as Kyiv wages a gruelling counter offensive to recapture lost territory.

"Despite comprehensive assistance from the West, Ukraine's armed forces are unable to achieve results," Mr. Shoigu said at a security conference in Moscow.

"Preliminary results of the hostilities show that Ukraine's military resources are almost exhausted," he said.

He added that there was "nothing unique" about Western weapons and that they were not invulnerable to Russian arms on the battlefield.

Mr. Shoigu was speaking at the Moscow Conference on International Security. Russia invited representatives from over 100 nations to attend, but Western countries were excluded.

Russian attack

Meanwhile, Russia said on Tuesday its forces struck military industrial facilities at several sites across Ukraine overnight after authorities in the west of the country announced aerial attacks had left three dead.

"Ukraine's military-industrial complex suffered significant damage," the Russian Defence Ministry said.

The Ukrainian Air Force said it destroyed 16 out of the 28 cruise missiles launched by Russia overnight.

At least 35 dead in blast at Russian fuel station

Agence France-Presse
MOSCOW

At least 35 people were killed and 80 injured in an explosion that created a huge fireball at a fuel station in Russia's remote Caucasus republic of Dagestan, spurring condolences from President Vladimir Putin.

The explosion in the city of Makhachkala happened at a fuel station after a fire broke out, the regional branch of the Investigative Committee said on social media.

"A fire occurred during car maintenance work, followed by a bang, as a result of which people were injured and died," the committee said, adding that nearby buildings and cars were damaged.

Dark chapter: Children of Taliban members hold toy weapons on a street near the U.S. embassy in Kabul on Tuesday. REUTERS

Taliban mark 2 years since return to Kabul

Agence France-Presse
KABUL

Afghanistan's Taliban government on Tuesday marked the second anniversary of their return to power, with supporters celebrating as critics denounced the restrictions on women's rights.

Flags of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan – the Taliban's formal name for the country – fluttered across the capital Kabul, which fell on August 15, 2021, after the U.S.-backed government collapsed and its leaders fled into exile.

In the two years since, Taliban authorities have imposed their strict interpretation of Islam, with women bearing the brunt of laws the United Nations has termed "gender apartheid".

Myanmar arrests nearly 150 fleeing Rohingya members

Agence France-Presse
YANGON

The 127 Rohingya men and 18 women were arrested on Friday in southern Mon state

Myanmar authorities have arrested nearly 150 Rohingya suspected of trying to flee the country, an official told AFP on Tuesday.

The mainly Muslim Rohingya are seen in Myanmar as interlopers from Bangladesh. They are denied citizenship and require permission to travel.

The military launched a crackdown on Rohingya in 2017, and thousands now risk their lives each year making perilous journeys from camps in Bangladesh and Myanmar to reach Muslim-majority Malaysia and Indonesia.

The 127 Rohingya men and 18 women were arrested on Friday near the village of Waekhami in southern Mon state.

Under investigation

"They have been detained since then and under investigation according to the immigration law," a spokesperson for Mon State Administration Council said.

Myanmar is facing genocide accusations at the United Nations' top court following the 2017 crackdown, which sent hundreds of thousands fleeing to Bangladesh.

Gun battles between rival armed groups kill two and shut down airport in Libya

Agence France-Presse
TRIPOLI

Intense fighting: Smoke billows amid clashes between armed militia groups on Tuesday. AFP

Gun battles between the two leading armed groups in Tripoli killed two persons and forced the closure of the Libyan Capital's only civilian airport, officials said on Tuesday.

Libya has seen more than a decade of stop-start conflict since the 2011 NATO-backed revolt that toppled strongman Moamer Kadhafi, with a myriad of militias forming opposing alliances backed by foreign powers.

A period of relative stability had led the United Nations to express hope for delayed elections to take place this year, and the latest fighting triggered international calls for calm.

The clashes between the influential 444 Brigade and the Al-Radaa, or Special Deterrence Force, erupted on Monday night and carried over into Tuesday, an interior ministry official said.

"Tensions arose" soon after it was announced "the Al-Radaa Force had arrested the head of the 444 Brigade, without explaining whether this was on judicial orders or for other reasons", the official said.

In May, the two sides had clashed for hours in Tripoli, also after the arrest of a 444 Brigade member.

Both groups are aligned with the divided country's UN-backed government of Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah in Tripoli.

So far, two persons have been killed and more than 30 wounded in the violence, as the fighting showed no signs of abating.

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INBRIEF

Cafe Coffee Day turns profit of ₹25 crore in June quarter

Coffee Day Global Ltd. (CDGL), which operates coffee chain CCD, has posted a net profit of ₹24.57 crore for the June quarter of FY2023-24. In the year-earlier period, the firm incurred a loss of ₹11.73 crore. Revenue from operations was at ₹223.20 crore in the quarter under review. This was ₹189.63 crore in the year-earlier period, according to the quarterly results of Coffee Day Enterprises Ltd. (CDEL). Total income of CDGL in the June quarter of 2023-24 was ₹250 crore. PTI

Adani to buy remaining 51% stake in Quintillion Media

Adani Group said it will acquire the remaining 51% stake in Quintillion Business Media Pvt. Ltd. to take full control of the Raghav Bahl-curated digital business news platform. Adani Enterprises said in a filing that the board of its subsidiary AMG Media Networks "has approved to enter into a binding MoU with Quintillion Media for the acquisition of remaining 51% stake" in the firm which operates the business and financial news digital media platform BQ Prime. PTI

Infosys, Liberty Global ink $1.6-bn deal to scale platforms

Converged video, broadband and communications company Liberty Global and IT services firm Infosys on Tuesday announced expanding their collaboration to scale Liberty Global's digital entertainment and connectivity platforms, in a deal valued at €1.5 billion (about $1.63 billion). Infosys will provide services to Liberty Global estimated at €1.5 billion over the initial 5-year term and the size of the contract will touch €2.3 billion if extended to 8 years. PTI

June exports tally raised by $1.4 bn

Outbound shipments in June have turned out to be higher than the eight-month low of $32.97 billion reported earlier; The increase has been driven largely by a $1.11 billion rise in petroleum products' exports compared with the initial assessment

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

India's goods exports may have slipped for the sixth month in a row in July, but the final tally of outbound shipments in June has turned out to be higher than the eight-month low of $32.97 billion reported earlier.

As per revised trade data, June's goods exports now stand about $1.4 billion higher at $34.35 billion, driven largely by a $1.11 billion rise in petroleum products' exports compared with the initial assessment, according to an analysis of the data by *The Hindu*.

Upward revision

India's goods export data for June has been revised higher while the import figure remains virtually unchanged

- The revision means a lower trade deficit of $18.75 bn compared with the initial gap of $20.13 bn for June
- Exports were revised upwards by an average of $3.2 bn every month between November 2022 and March
- Between April-July, petroleum exports slid 32.5% to $23.67 bn owing to the fall in global oil prices

The upward revision for June not only means a lower 18.7% dip in shipments than the 22% decline earlier estimated, but also translates into a lower trade deficit of $18.75 billion compared with the initial gap of $20.13 billion. This is because the import figures remained virtually unchanged from the $53.1 billion reported initially.

Goods trade numbers had seen sharp revisions running into billions of dollars through 2022-23, but the first two months of this financial year had seen only minor revisions of a few millions. While the $1.4 billion uptick in June's export figures is significant, it is not as sharp as the increases during the five-month period between November 2022 and March 2023 when exports were upgraded by an average of $3.2 billion every month from their initial estimates.

A senior government official had told *The Hindu* that revisions seen over the past year and a half were reckoned to be largely driven by changes in petroleum products' data. "There seemed to be recurrent delays in reporting some petroleum exports, particularly from units located in special economic zones or SEZs," the official had said.

Between April and July, petroleum exports have declined 32.5% to $23.67 billion, with officials attributing this to the fall in global oil prices rather than lower export volumes.

Govt. raises windfall tax on crude, ATF, diesel export

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Centre has raised the windfall profit tax on domestic crude oil and on export of diesel, while bringing back the levy on overseas shipments of ATF.

The tax, levied as special additional excise duty (SAED), on domestic crude has been raised to ₹7,100 a tonne from ₹4,250, according to a notification.

Also, the SAED on export of diesel has been raised to ₹5.50 a litre from ₹1. A duty of ₹2 a litre will be imposed on export of ATF from August 15.

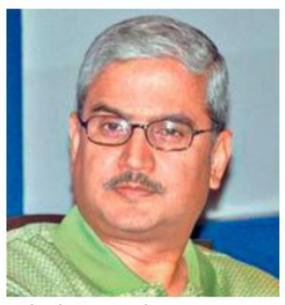
IndiGo's Gangwal looks to sell 4% stake

Aneesh Phadnis
MUMBAI

IndiGo co-founder Rakesh Gangwal is looking to raise more than ₹3,730 crore by paring his stake in the airline via a block trade scheduled for Wednesday.

Mr. Gangwal has offered around 15.6 million shares for sale equal to 4% stake in the airline at a floor price of ₹2,400 per share.

The offer price is at a 5.8% discount to InterGlobe Aviation's closing price on Monday.


Rakesh Gangwal

Third share sale

This will be Mr. Gangwal's third such share sale since last year. Currently, he holds 29.72% stake in the airline and his shareholding is valued at more than ₹29,000 crore as per current market price.

Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan and Morgan Stanley are managing the sale. "We hope to see a good response for the block trade," said a source in the know. The airline, which commands a domestic market share of over 63%, reported its highest-ever quarterly profit of ₹3,191 crore in the June-ended quarter.

E-mails and text messages to Mr. Gangwal seeking a comment did not get an immediate response. Mr. Gangwal co-founded IndiGo with Rahul Bhatia in 2006 but fell out following a dispute over corporate governance issues.

The differences between the promoters became public in July 2019 when Mr. Gangwal wrote to the Securities and Exchange Board of India seeking its intervention to address the corporate governance issues. Mr. Bhatia rejected the allegations and both sides initiated arbitration to resolve the dispute. The company's articles of association were amended in December 2021 allowing either promoter to sell shares without giving a right of first refusal notice to the other.

Mr. Gangwal continues to be a co-promoter but resigned as a director from the company's board last February. Back then, he had announced his intent to reduce his stake in the airline over five years.

Last September, Mr. Gangwal and his wife Shobha sold 2.74% stake in InterGlobe mopping up ₹2,004 crore. This was followed by another round of share sale in February when the family sold 4% for ₹2,900 crore.

(*The writer is with The Hindu businessline*)

India's imports from Russia doubled to $20.4 bn in April-July

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

India's imports from Russia doubled to $20.45 billion during the April-July period of this fiscal due to increasing inbound shipments of crude oil and fertiliser from that country, according to commerce ministry data.

With this, Russia has become India's second-largest import source during the first four months of this fiscal. The imports were $10.42 billion during April-July 2022. From a market share of less than 1% in India's import basket before the start of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Russia's share of India's oil imports rose to over 40%.

India, the world's third-largest crude importer after China and the United States, has been buying Russian oil that was available at a discount after some in the West shunned it as a means of punishing Moscow for the invasion of Ukraine.

On the exports front, India's exports to seven of its top 10 destinations have recorded negative growth during the period.

Mahindra unveils light weight compact tractors in Cape Town

Vikas Vasudeva
CAPE TOWN (SOUTH AFRICA)

Mahindra Tractors, a part of the Mahindra Group on Tuesday unveiled, what it termed the 'future-ready' range of tractors - the Mahindra OJA - at Futurescape, an event held in Cape Town.

The new OJA range, the company said, brings about a transformative shift in lightweight compact 4-wheel drive (4WD) tractor design and engineering, to deliver an innovation edge in tractor technology.

The new tractors on the three OJA platforms include the sub compact, compact and small utility, to address diverse market needs. With 4WD as standard, Mahindra has come out with 7 new tractors models for the Indian market on the compact and small utility platforms.

Hemant Sikka

These models range from 20HP - 40HP (14.91kW - 29.82kW), for a wide array of applications, for unparalleled platform versatility and efficiency to handle diverse agricultural tasks, the company said. Speaking about the new OJA tractor range, Hemant Sikka, president - Farm Equipment Sector, Mahindra & Mahindra said, "The new OJA range of lightweight tractors is a powerhouse of energy, aimed at progressive farmers."

Embodied with innovation and technology, OJA tractors empowered Mahindra to address 25% of the global tractor industry, while opening new markets like Europe and ASEAN, he said.

"Unveiling 7 agile lightweight 4WD tractors (21-40HP) in India, equipped with pioneering technologies, truly embodies our commitment to revolutionise farming worldwide," Mr. Sikka said.

(The writer was in Cape Town at the invitation of the Mahindra Group)

CAI maintains cotton crop estimate at 311 lakh bales

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

The Cotton Association of India (CAI) on Tuesday maintained its cotton crop production forecast for the 2022-23 season at 311.18 lakh bales.

In the last cotton season, the total cotton production was at 307.05 lakh bales, CAI said in a statement. The cotton season runs from October to September.

The total cotton supply for October 2022 to July 2023 is estimated at 332.30 lakh bales. Cotton consumption for the same period is estimated at 265 lakh bales, while export shipments up to July 31 is estimated at 14 lakh bales.

India accounts for 35% of cargo handled by Russia's Arctic Murmansk port this year

T. Ramakrishnan
MURMANSK (RUSSIA)

India's engagement with Russia's Arctic region has been strengthening with India-bound goods constituting the maximum share of cargo handled this year by Murmansk, located about 2,000 km northwest of Moscow.

In the first seven months of 2023, Murmansk port, the main northern gateway of Russia and a transshipment hub, handled 8 million tonnes of cargo. Of this, India accounted for 35%.

"Mostly, it is coal," Andrey Andreevich Dotsenko, Deputy Director - Commercial Director of the JSC

Murmansk Sea Commercial Port, told a group of visiting journalists. He added the coal was bound for the eastern coast of India, without elaborating. Turkey and China were among other countries served by the Murmansk port with the former's share being 34% and the latter's, 13%.

India was also getting involved in the Northern Sea Route (NSR), which is the shortest shipping route connecting the western part of Eurasia and the Asia-Pacific region. "The record supplies of energy resources for the Indian economy are possible due to such a reliable and safe transport artery as the NSR," Rosatom State Nuclear Energy Corp. said.

But there are challenges in navigating the 5,600-km-long NSR. The route includes the seas of the Arctic Ocean [Kara, Laptev, East Siberian and Chukchi] which remain icebound during most parts of the year. Ice-breaking therefore assumes importance, a task performed by FSUE Atomflot, a unit of Rosatom and the fleet operator of nuclear-powered icebreakers.

Asked if NSR was being promoted as an alternative to the Suez Canal, Leonid Aleksandrovich Irlitsa, Director General of FSUE Atomflot, said that it would reduce the gap between Europe and countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

For instance, the NSR across the Arctic Ocean from Murmansk to Yokohama in Japan is about 6,000 nautical miles (NM). Alternatively, the distance via the southern shipping routes is about 13,000 NM.

(The writer was in Murmansk at the invitation of Rosatom State Nuclear Energy Corporation)

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BIDDING ADIEU

Sri Lanka all-rounder Hasaranga announces retirement from Tests

Sri Lanka all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga on Tuesday announced his retirement from Test cricket as he seeks to prolong his career in the limited-over format. Hasaranga made his Test debut against South Africa in 2020, and played three more Tests thereafter. From four Tests, he took four wickets with his leg-spin.

TARGET SET

Cummins eyes return during ODI series against India in September

Recovering from a left wrist injury, Australia captain Pat Cummins on Tuesday said he is eyeing a return to international cricket during his side's three-match ODI series against India during late September. Cummins, who fractured his wrist during the fifth Ashes Test at the Oval (July 27-31), has been advised rest for six weeks.

MASSIVE WIN

Venus rallies from big deficits to beat 16th-ranked Kudermetova

Venus Williams beat a top-20 player for the first time in four years, rallying from big deficits in both sets to knock off 16th-ranked Veronika Kudermetova 6-4, 7-5 in the first round of the Western & Southern Open on Monday. The 43-year-old improved her match record this year to 3-5. She came in ranked 533rd.

THE BRAZILIAN TOUCH

Neymar moves to Al Hilal for record Saudi league fee

Neymar became the latest footballer to take the riches on offer from the Saudi Pro League, completing a move to Al Hilal on Tuesday after six seasons at Paris Saint-Germain. The clubs reached an agreement on the transfer of the Brazil forward for a reported €90 million ($98 million), a record for a league.

Arjun overpowers Pragg; Carlsen outwits Gukesh

Vidit holds a slight edge in the first half of his game against Abasov before their 109-move battle ends with honours even; Perez lets slip a big advantage, allows Caruana to escape with a draw

CHESS WORLD CUP

Sports Bureau

Arjun Erigaisi played bravely and executed his plan brilliantly to overpower R. Praggnanandhaa in 53 moves in the first game of their clash in the FIDE World Cup quarterfinals in Baku, Azerbaijan, on Tuesday.

A little earlier, Magnus Carlsen recorded his fourth successive victory in classical time-format by punishing D. Gukesh for an error of judgement in their first decisive battle in three encounters.

Vidit Gujrathi held a small advantage during the first half of his game against local hope Nijat Abasov but could not enlarge it enough. The game eventually ended in a marathon 109-move draw.

It was a similar script in the all-American encounter, where Leinier Dominguez Perez tossed away a massive advantage and let World No. 2 Fabiano Caruana escape with a 71-move draw. The foundation of Arjun's first win over Praggnanandhaa in only their second classical time-control game was laid when he sacrificed a knight for two kingside pawns.

Sweet success: Arjun executed his plan well to register his first win over Praggnanandhaa in only their second classical time-control game. FIDE

What shifted the balance in Arjun's favour was Praggnanandhaa's 37th move when he ignored the danger posed by the black queen and played his bishop.

Sensing his chance, Arjun calculated for three minutes and belted out the next seven moves in the space of 78 seconds to send a signal to his younger rival that he had calculated this winning line.

Praggnanandhaa delayed the inevitable by taking 21 minutes for the next move and eventually gave up in 53 moves after Arjun's queen returned to the board. Carlsen and Gukesh were evenly matched until the Indian teenager erred on the 34th move, by moving his rook to the queen's side. At this point, the players had a rook and three pawns each. Off the next move, Carlsen did not find the best continuation but Gukesh immediately offered his famed rival a second chance and that proved decisive.

Carlsen wasted no time in bringing his rook and king closer to Gukesh's isolated kingside pawn and soon promoted a central passed-pawn to the seventh rank, a helpless Gukesh gave up in 48 moves.

In the women's semifinals, second-seeded Russian Aleksandra Goryachkina tamed China's Tan Zhongyi in 45 moves after Ukraine's Anna Muzychuk drew with Bulgaria's Nurgyul Salimova in 32 moves.

The results:

Open (quarterfinals, Game 1): D. Gukesh (2744) lost to 1-Magnus Carlsen (Nor, 2835); 20-Vidit Gujrathi (2719) drew with 69-Nijat Abasov (Aze, 2632); 11-Leinier Dominguez Perez (USA, 2739) drew with 3-Fabiano Caruana (USA, 2782); 31-R. Praggnanandhaa (2690) lost to 23-Arjun Erigaisi (2690).

Historic moment for Indian chess, says Anand

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The legendary Viswanathan Anand on Tuesday hailed the remarkable feat of four Indian chess players entering the quarterfinals of the FIDE World Cup 2023, saying it is a "historic moment for Indian chess."

D. Gukesh, R. Praggnanandhaa, Arjun Erigaisi and Vidit Gujarathi have entered the last eight stage of the World Cup being played at Baku.

"It is a historic moment for Indian chess because we had a good hand, which is multiple players who are playing, who are all good... good enough level to qualify for the final stages," said Anand in a video shared by *chess.com*.

Anand, a five-time world champion, said the young players are taking Indian chess through a "happy time." "I was hoping that at least one or two, simply statistically, will break through to the quarterfinals. But four of them have managed (to enter quarterfinals). So, it is a happy time for Indian chess," he added.

Carmona's late strike seals Spain's maiden final berth

Cock-a-hoop: Carmona's 89th-minute goal powered Spain past Sweden. REUTERS

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Agence France-Presse
AUCKLAND

Olga Carmona's stunning late strike gave Spain a 2-1 win over Sweden on Tuesday to propel it into the Women's World Cup final for the first time in its history.

Spain's thrilling victory at Eden Park sets up a showdown in Sydney on Sunday with either Australia or England who meet on Wednesday.

The semifinal in Auckland seemed to be drifting towards extra time before suddenly bursting to life when substitute Salma Paralluelo put Spain ahead with nine minutes left.

Rebecka Blomqvist equalised for Sweden in the 88th minute only for full-back Carmona, Spain's captain, to score with a superb shot in off the underside of the crossbar from the edge of the box.

It has been a remarkable run for a nation which had never previously gone beyond the last 16 at a Women's World Cup.

Familiar script

While Spain's dream of World Cup glory remains alive, this is the third time in four World Cups the Swedes have reached the semifinals and lost on each occasion.

Spain's plan was clearly to dominate possession and make a more physically imposing Sweden do the chasing.

The Spaniards had far more of the ball in the first half yet neither Alexia Putellas nor Aitana Bonmati were allowed the time and space to really influence the game.

The closest it came to breaking the deadlock was from long range, when Jennifer Hermoso laid the ball back to Carmona, whose shot whistled wide.

The result (semifinal): Spain 2 (Paralluelo 81, Carmona 89) bt Sweden 1 (Blomqvist 88).

Wednesday's fixture: Australia vs England (3:30 p.m. IST).

Everything is going to be new for Bumrah, says Balaji

Bumrah. FILE PHOTO

L. Balaji. FILE PHOTO

S. Prasanna Venkatesan
TIRUNELVELI

Former India pacer Lakshmipathy Balaji said that he's "excited to see how Jasprit Bumrah is going to come back," into the Indian team in the context of the upcoming World Cup in India.

Bumrah last bowled for India in September last year. He had recovered from stress fracture in the back only to be again ruled out injured. So much so, he had to undergo a surgery in New Zealand in March.

With great anticipation surrounding his return to the team, he's now left for Ireland with the India squad as its skipper. India is set to play three T20Is versus Ireland.

"Any back surgery, it'll have some little bit of hiccups here and there. But that is the maximum you can do. For a conservative healing, if it has not healed, and you have the surgery option, and to take it and then come back, it's the last stage. So, everything is going to be new (for him), and again getting back, there will be challenges, but that is what makes individuals perform higher," Balaji said here on Tuesday.

The 41-year-old praised Mohammed Siraj and tipped him to be selected for the World Cup.

"Siraj has done well. In the recent past in white-ball cricket, Siraj has done exceedingly well. So, it's up to the selection committee and the team management. But we have got a very good chance (of winning the World Cup) this time!"

Stokes set to come out of retirement to play World Cup

Press Trust of India
LONDON

England Test captain Ben Stokes is all set to come out of retirement and play the ODI World Cup in India even if it comes at the cost of missing a season of the IPL, according to British daily *The Telegraph*.

According to a report in the leading English newspaper, "Ben Stokes is prepared to make a sensational u-turn and reverse his ODI retirement to help England's World Cup defence in India this year even if it means missing out on next season's IPL. The England Test captain now appears willing to play in the World Cup if he is asked by white-ball captain Jos Buttler," the paper further reported.

The reason why Stokes could give his Rs 16 crore annual IPL deal with CSK a miss, is the five-Test series against India that will start on January 25 and end on March 11.

If Stokes plays two months of IPL till the end of May, then he would be spending close to five months in India, which might not be feasible for him.

"While concern lingers over Stokes' knee which might require operation at some stage, it is understood that he would be prepared to miss next season's IPL if he needs a gap in his schedule to help him recover."

Stokes. FILE PHOTO

England starts its campaign on October 5 in Ahmedabad against New Zealand and the 32-year-old Stokes, who has played 105 ODIs for his country before retiring from the format last year, might just come out of retirement for one tournament to help Butler's side regain the trophy. Stokes was Player-of-the-Final in the last edition at home.

The report also stated that, if need be, Stokes will play as a specialist batter in the middle-order.

Indian football legend Habib passes away

Sports Bureau
HYDERABAD

Mohd. Habib, the football playmaker par excellence, is no more. He was 74 and suffering from dementia and Parkinson's syndrome for the last couple of years and survived by wife and three daughters.

Habib represented India in many international tournaments between 1965 and 1976. He was considered by many experts as one of the best players the country has ever produced, and was also a bronze medallist in the 1970 Asian Games in Bangkok. The team was led by fellow Hyderabadi Syed Nayeemuddin and managed by the great P.K. Banerjee.

One of the high-points of Habib's career was when he turned out for Mohun Bagan against the visiting Cosmos Club, which featured the legendary Pele, in a 'friendly' in 1977.

"It will remain one of my greatest moments and it was appreciated by Pele himself at the end of the match. He hugged me and wished me luck," the Arjuna awardee told *The Hindu*'in one of his interviews.

During many conversations over the years, Habib always said he wore the Mohammedan Sporting jersey, the club he joined in 1971, with great pride.

All stars: Habib, second from right, with Olympian Nazam, former India coach Nayeemuddin, and former India captain Amalraj.

For 17 seasons from 1966-67, Habib, despite his diminutive nature, was a stalwart on Kolkata's football grounds, according to former India captain Victor Amalraj.

Habib was also instrumental in transforming the Tata Football Academy into a force to reckon with.

"It is sad to see him suffering from this syndrome. He was such a gifted footballer, who on his day, was the most-dreaded striker. He was mentored and moulded during the latter half of his career by the great P.K. Banerjee," Amalraj recalled.

"I learnt many tricks from Habib bhai," said an emotional Amalraj.

Interestingly, Habib greatly influenced Amalraj, with the latter playing under him and also vice-versa between 1978-82. "I have learnt many tricks from Habib Bhai."

Shyam Thapa on Habib

"The passing away of Habib is a personal loss for me. I have very fond memories of playing with Habib. He was a great fighter and despite his relatively small frame was all about fortitude when he was on the pitch. His level of motivation is hard to come by as he would always tell us to go for it whatever be the stature of the opposition.

I can vividly remember his performance in the 1970 Asian Games when we were the youngsters of the team and were overjoyed to win the bronze."

Australia, England to battle it out in the semifinals

Agence France-Presse
SYDNEY

Australia and England clash in the Women's World Cup semifinals on Wednesday in Sydney in the latest installment of a long-standing sporting rivalry between the countries.

The Matildas have the nation behind them for the first World Cup semifinal in their history and Stadium Australia will be heaving with an anticipated crowd of about 80,000.

But England is the European champion and will be favourites to reach the final of the World Cup for the first time, even if it must face down a hostile crowd.

It was put to England's Dutch coach Sarina Wiegman that she probably did not fully appreciate the enormity of a match between Australia and England.

"It's going be really big," she said. "But now I've had a couple of questions about that so it's probably going to be bigger than I imagined now."

England football captain Millie Bright understands how much it means to fans of both countries. "This is the biggest tournament in the women's game to date so what a game to be a part of," she said.

INBRIEF

England all-rounder Woakes bags ICC POTM award

England all-rounder Chris Woakes capped off a memorable Ashes performance with the ICC Men's Player of the Month award for July 2023. Woakes bagged the ICC Men's Player of the Month for July 2023 after conquering competition from compatriot Zak Crawley and Netherlands' star Bas de Leede.

Prajwal gets past Kalovelonis in the first round

S.D. Prajwal Dev got past Markos Kalovelonis of Greece 7-6(5), 6-3 in the first round of the $25,000 ITF men's tennis tournament in Jakarta, Indonesia, on Tuesday.

Other results:
$25,000 ITF men, Tainan, Chinese Taipei: First round: Taisei Ichikawa (Jpn) bt Atharva Sharma 6-3, 6-1; **Doubles (pre-quarterfinals):** Yamato Sueoka & Naoki Tajima (Jpn) bt Jesse Delaney (Aus) & Digvijay Pratap Singh 6-2, 6-7(5), [13-11]; Parth Aggarwal & Kazuki Nisshiwaki (Jpn) bt Rishab Agarwal & Lorenzo Bocchi (Ita) 6-1, 7-5.
$25,000 ITF men, Jakarta:Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Yuta Kawahashi (Jpn) & Lee Jeamoon (Kor) bt Shivank Bhatnagar & Ki Lung Ng (Hkg) 6-1, 6-1; Markos Kalovelonis (Gre) & Khumoyun Sultanov (Uzb) bt Rishi Reddy & Gunawan Trismuwantara (Ina) 7-6(2), 6-3; Siddhant Banthia & Sora Fukuda (Jpn) bt Cade Birrell & Moerani Bouzige (Aus) 7-5, 6-2.
$15,000 ITF women, Ust-Kamenogorsk: First round: Asylzhan Arystanbekova (Kaz) bt Sanjana Sirimalla 6-2, 6-0; **Doubles (pre-quarterfinals):** Vladislava Andreevskaya (Kgz) & Dana Baidaulet (Kaz) bt Soha Sadiq & Saumya Vig 6-1, 6-3.

Miami coach Martino shrugs off Messi's injury scare

Inter Miami coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino played down injury concerns over Lionel Messi on Monday as the resurgent MLS club prepares for the Leagues Cup semifinal clash with Philadelphia. Argentina superstar Messi appeared to tweak his right ankle during a practice session in Fort Lauderdale early on Monday, according to multiple reports.

LIVE TELECAST

Durand Cup: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 3 & 6 p.m.
Women's World Cup: FanCode, 3.30 p.m.

Sharath's quickfire 111 powers Dragons to a win over Warriors

The wicketkeeper-batter puts on 96 runs for the second wicket with opener Rohan Patil; Rohan Kadam and Nihal Ullal guide Shivamogga Lions past Bengaluru Blasters in the second encounter of the day

On fire: Sharath's efforts helped take Dragons to the 202-run target with seven balls to spare. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

MAHARAJA TROPHY

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

B.R. Sharath (111 n.o., 61b, 9x4, 5x6) powered Mangaluru Dragons to a five-wicket win over Mysuru Warriors in the Maharaja Trophy KSCA T20 at M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Tuesday.

One-drop Sharath and opener Rohan Patil (54, 27b, 5x4, 3x6) put on 96 runs for the second wicket to take Mangalore to the 202-run target with seven balls to spare.

Sharath reached his half-century in 33 balls with a six.

The wicketkeeper-batter followed up with three sixes in the thirteenth over off legspinner Kushal Wadhwani. Aneeshwar Gautam (6), K.V. Siddharth (14) and Aniruddha Joshi (2) could not fire, but did this not dent Mangalore's chances. Put in to bat, Mysuru got off the blocks with a good contribution from C.A. Karthik (29, 18b, 5x4, 1x6). Captain Karun Nair and southpaw

Rahul Rawat kept the scoreboard ticking by adding 47 runs off 35 balls for the third wicket.

Karun was on song, playing shots all over the ground in a 39-ball 77. Big-hitting Manoj Bhandage provided the finishing touches with an unbeaten 10-ball 26.

In the second encounter of the day, Shivamogga Lions cruised past Bengaluru Blasters by 36 runs. The Shivamogga win was set up by openers Rohan Kadam (70, 47b, 6x4, 3x6) and Nihal Ullal (40, 17b, 4x4, 3x6).

The duo gave Shivamogga a terrific start, putting on 65 runs in five overs.

Abhinav Manohar (31, 21b, 1x4, 2x6) and Kranthi Kumar (25, 10b, 1x4, 2x6) came good in the middle order to push Shivamogga to 201 for five.

Karun was on song for Warriors, playing shots all over the ground in a 39-ball 77. Manoj Bhandage provided the finishing touches with an unbeaten 10-ball 26

Quick dimissals

Bengaluru lost openers Mayank Agarwal and Bhuvan Raju without putting a run on the board, and never recovered. J. Acharya (29), Pavan Deshpande (32), Aashish Mahesh (30 n.o.) and Shubhang Hegde (22, 13b, 2x6) tried to steady the ship, but to no avail.

The scores:
Mysuru Warriors 201/5 in 20 overs (Karun Nair 77, C.A. Karthik 29, Manoj Bhandage 26) lost to Mangaluru Dragons 202/5 in 18.5 overs (B.R. Sharath 111 n.o., Rohan Patil 54).

Shivamogga Lions 201/5 in 20 overs (Rohan Kadam 70, Nihal Ullal 40, Abhinav Manohar 31, Kranthi Kumar 25) bt Bengaluru Blasters 165/8 in 20 overs (J. Acharya 29, Pavan Deshpande 32, Aashish Mahesh 30 n.o.).

Man United scrapes past Wolves

Associated Press
MANCHESTER

Manchester United needed a 76th-minute goal from defender Raphael Varane to eke out a 1-0 win over Wolverhampton after being outplayed for long periods of its Premier League opener on Tuesday.

The former France center back headed home from point-blank range after Aaron Wan Bissaka ran onto a lofted pass from Bruno Fernandes and lobbed a cross into the six-yard box.

It was a rare slick move from United, which gave competitive debuts to goalkeeper Andre Onana and Mason Mount and failed to look cohesive.

Wolves struck the post through Matheus Cunha early in the second half, while substitute Fabio Silva drew two saves from the feet of Onana in the closing stages as United hung on at Old Trafford.

The results: Premier League: Manchester United 1 (Varane 76) bt Wolverhampton 0.
La Liga: Atletico Madrid 3 (Morata 45+4, Depay, Llorente 90+8) bt Granada 1 (Samu 62).
On Monday: Cadiz 1 (Fede 7) bt Alaves 0.

TNCA XI on top after bowling out Kerala for 218

BUCHI BABU

S. Prasanna Venkatesan
TIRUNELVELI

TNCA XI has seized the first day after bowling out Kerala for 218 in the Group-D match of the TNCA Buchi Babu Memorial All India invitational cricket tournament at the India Cement Company ground here on Tuesday.

Kerala lost half of its wickets in the first session itself. The wicket was conducive for fast bowlers, and that elicited a sigh of relief from both TNCA coach L. Balaji and bowler P. Saravana Kumar.

A visibly content Saravana Kumar said at the tea break that the wicket offered carry.

Sijomon Joseph.
FILE PHOTO: P.K. AJITH KUMAR

"If you play on a very good wicket, you definitely have a better chance of playing a good brand of cricket. So, that is what happened. Especially fast-bowlers! When there is a little bit of help from the wicket, that maximises the fast-bowlers' energy," Balaji said.

Perishing to pull

Three batters perished playing the pull short to short deliveries. Opener Krishna Prasad pulled P. Saravana Kumar to be caught by M. Siddharth at deep square leg, Vathsal Govind Sharma pulled Ajay K. Krishna to be caught by M. Siddharth again at deep square leg, and Vinoop S. Manoharan attempted a pull off V. Yudheeswaran to be caught behind down the leg side.

Besides taking two fine catches, left-arm spinner Siddharth ended up taking three wickets (three for 47) himself. Skipper and off-spinner M. Shahrukh Khan bowled himself and picked up two wickets (two for 16) too. Resistance came only in the form of left-hander Sijomon Joseph's unbeaten 62 (93b, 6x4).

The scores (first day):
Kerala 218 in 75.5 overs (Sijomon Joseph 62 n.o.) vs. TNCA XI 50 for no loss in 10 overs; **Toss:** TNCA XI.
At Dindigul: Baroda 252/6 in 90 overs (Jyotsnil Singh 114, Priyanshu Moliya 51, Vishnu Solanki 58 batting, Jayant Yadav 4/78) vs Haryana. **Toss:** Baroda.
At Salem: Mumbai 328/5 in 90 overs (Muhseer Khan 113, Prasad Pawar 72, Hardik Tamore 56 batting) vs Delhi. **Toss:** Mumbai.
At Coimbatore: Railways 251/4 in 87 overs (Nishant Kushwah 106, Sahab Yuvraj 92 batting) vs. TNCA President's XI.

KARNATAKA ROUND-UP

Apoorv Kamble is king

Apoorv Kamble, with nine points, won the State under-15 FIDE-rated Open chess championship at Kalaburagi recently. Aarush Rajesh secured the second spot with 7.5 points and was followed by Siddhanth Poonja and Bhuvan Krishna on 7 points each. In the girls' section, Drishtee Ghosh topped the charts with 7.5 points while U.A. Disha, Pratitee Bordoloi and A.N. Shefali finished second, third and fourth. All the three finished with seven points but were separated by a tie-breaker.

Shashidhar propels DYES past IBBC

Shashidhar starred with 25 points as DYES Bangalore edged out IBBC 73-69 in the State A-division basketball championship in Bengaluru on Tuesday.

The results: Bank of Baroda 84 (Anil Kumar 32, Arvind 22) bt Mangalore BC 75 (Ashwij 24, Rajath 15); DYES Bangalore 73 (Shashidhar 25, Nishanth 13) bt IBBC 69 (Akhil 18, Thrishul 12); Young Orions SC 100 (Aaron 28, Gautham 13) bt S. Blues 37 (Chiru 15); Mangalore BC 73 (Rajath 29, Sowkin Shetty 13) bt Bharath SU 62 (Akshay 32, Anand 11).

Solaimalai Kickstarts campaign in style

R. Solaimalai scored a brace as Kickstart FC blanked FC Agniputhra 4-0 on the opening day of the BDFA Super Division football league on Tuesday.

The results: South United FC 2 (V.S. Thotkadhar Zimik 13, Md. Altab Hussain 38 bt Rebels FC 1 (Bibin Babu 6); Kickstart FC 4 (R. Solaimalai 48, 62, Benjamin Lupheng 80, Abhishekh Shanakr 84) bt FC Agniputhra 0.

Samurai Blues advances

Samurai Blues FA pipped FC White Field 2-1 to enter the last four of the KSFA Bangalore North & South C-division football league on Tuesday.

Other results (quarterfinals): Snipers FC 4 bt Hawks United FC 0; Stride Sports FC 8 bt Universal Blues FC 0; Rebels Phoenix 1 bt Black Moon 1 [4-3 on penalties].

Vinesh pulls out due to knee injury; clears way for Panghal's inclusion

ASIAN GAMES

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Vinesh Phogat, who was given direct entry to the Asian Games, on Tuesday announced that she won't be able to compete at the in Hangzhou because of a knee injury that will require a surgery.

The exemption from the Asian Games trials given to Vinesh and Bajrang Punia had created a huge controversy as the wrestling fraternity criticised the decision made by the ad-hoc panel.

However, as luck would have it, Vinesh would not be part of the sporting action in Hangzhou, starting September 23.

Vinesh revealed her injury in a statement on social media.

"I wanted to share an extremely sad piece of news. A couple of days ago on 13th August 2023, I injured my left knee in training. After doing the scans and examinations, the doctor has said that unfortunately, surgery is the only option for me to recover," she wrote.

"I will be undergoing surgery on 17th August in Mumbai. It was my dream to retain my Asian Games gold medal for India which I won in 2018 in Jakarta. But unfortunately, this injury has ruled out my par
ticipation now."

She also said that she has informed all concerned authorities so that the reserve player can be sent to the Asian Games.

It clears the way for Antim Panghal's inclusion in the squad. The U-20 world champion Panghal had won the trials and was put on standby.

"I would like to request all the fans to continue supporting me so that I can make a strong comeback on the mat soon and prepare for the Paris 2024 Olympics. Your support gives me a slot of strength," Vinesh wrote.

Vinesh. FILE PHOTO

Sanjay makes his way into history books

BENGALURU: Sanjay Selvamani became the first-ever Indian to claim a heat win in a World Surf League event at the TN International Surf Open WSL Qualifying Series (QS) 3,000 event on Tuesday. He picked off a number of long right-hand runners to take the heat win in only his second QS event appearance.

The Indian fans' passion drives world cricket, yet they are made to struggle

BETWEEN WICKETS
Suresh Menon

The Indian cricket fan is an amazingly tolerant creature, willing to put up with all manner of inconveniences, all the hardships of getting into and out of stadiums where they sit on badly-maintained and dirty seats and often go hungry. During the IPL final in Ahmedabad, they stood smiling under the leaking stadium roof in the rain.

World cricket lives on the passion and patience of the Indian fan. Yet, among the stakeholders – from the players and officials to the television moguls and sponsors – he is shown the least consideration. Still, he does not complain. The uncomplaining paying customer who keeps coming back for more is the dream of sports officials everywhere.

When you pay ₹1,159 crores as income tax, you might think you are entitled to being arrogant. The Board of Control for Cricket in India, which paid that amount recently, doesn't need any special reason to be arrogant. It can wait till there's just three months to go for the World Cup before deigning to release the schedule. And then change it a month later, throwing travel plans into disarray.

It can tell us that we need to register online, book online and then queue up for physical tickets since e-tickets are not accepted. This, for a country that has been patting itself on the back as a leading IT centre in the world.

Ordeals

In a well-argued piece in *EspnCricinfo*, Shashank Kishore has detailed the ordeals awaiting fans keen on witnessing the India-Pakistan match in Ahmedabad, now rescheduled for October 14. Airline tickets, hotel accommodation, queues for match tickets are only some of these, with hotels charging 15 times their normal rate. The ever-present ticket touts have the biggest smiles. No coincidence, then, that Hermes, the Greek god of sports, is also the god of the crossroads and thieves.

Suddenly fans are searching for long-ignored relatives they can stay with. Nothing like a cricket match to bring families together. Travel groups from around the world looking for the India experience are, sadly, likely to get the unabridged version.

India is a country that lives in the eleventh hour. Somehow, things have a way of sorting themselves out. Still, there are too many logistical issues in the mix.

Spectators are treated like a bunch of schoolchildren awaiting a chance to draw obscene pictures on the school walls or like a bunch of politicians in our assemblies, itching to throw chairs and mikes at one another. No pens or pencils or bottles or food or water is allowed to be carried inside. The paying fan waits for hours before gates that don't open early enough. As for toilets, fans have for years practiced the art of holding everything in till they leave the stadium. Clever maintenance in the stadiums ensures there is no crowding outside toilets (because few want to use them).

Simple things like announcing the schedule in advance (those of the previous World Cups in England and Australia were available a year ahead), streamlining the ticketing process, and acting like the fans matter would have earned the BCCI the thanks of the cricketing world. But that august body works under the assumption that fans will come whatever it does or doesn't. There has never been acknowledgement that without the fans, the BCCI will not have become the behemoth it has, dictating the direction the game should take while raking in billions of dollars.

The BCCI thinks fans don't matter because television is where the money comes from – but obviously here too fans matter, because if there is a drop in viewership, advertisers will withdraw, rights will not cost as much and a vicious circle will be set in motion.

Poor facilities add to players' problems too. At the 1996 World Cup the crowd's pent up rage at the various discomforts led to trouble erupting in the stands as India lost wickets. It led to the match referee awarding the semifinal to Sri Lanka by default.

If in the end things turn out well, this too is thanks to the fans who are willing to pay for their inconvenience. Cricket and spectators have a unique relationship in India, and officials are happy to exploit this. The build-up is always worrying and troublesome, but the event itself is successful. Thank Hermes!